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**Making news in the People's Republic of China:  
The case of CCTV-9**

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**Making news in the People's Republic of China:  
The case of CCTV-9**

**by**

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**Dissertation**

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“We welcome these foreigners who come to help us. But the trouble with so many foreigners is that they soon want to dictate. They must remember that this is China, and that while their advice is eagerly received, we are the ones to decide if and how it will be used.”

(Mao Zedong)<sup>1</sup>

## **Dedication**

For my family.

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<sup>1</sup> Brady (2003, p. 50).



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I owe a huge debt of gratitude to John Downing and Karin Wilkins, co-supervisors of my dissertation, and to the other committee members – Shanti Kumar, Nikhil Sinha and Joseph Straubhaar. In addition, my family has been a constant source of support and encouragement over the years. In Austin, students, staff and faculty at The University of Texas contributed to this dissertation with support and discussion. On and off campus, a small circle made my stay in Austin pleasurable in myriad ways and with timely reminders of what is important and what is not. In Beijing, while I was doing field research, friends there brought the city to life in ways that escape mere description. Finally, I cannot thank enough my friends and colleagues at China Central Television. They made this dissertation possible, and they and their work are its subject. Although few of them are named, they know who they are and how they helped. I hope they can find themselves in my work and can see how they changed the way I think about news making in the People's Republic of China.

**Making news in the People's Republic of China:  
The case of CCTV-9**

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This dissertation explores the news making process at CCTV-9, the Beijing-based global English language service of China Central Television (CCTV). My interest in this topic was triggered by the strange manner in which so much debate about media reform in the People's Republic of China (PRC) elides any real discussion of the contribution of journalists themselves to reform, which is almost invariably treated as something that happens to media from outside of, or regardless of, what journalists do. My aim in this research was to address this lapsus and foreground the work of journalists to show how it contributes to the changing institutional framework in which their work is embedded and therefore contributes to media reform. Drawing on ground-breaking work on bounded innovation and resistance by Pan Zhongdang and Lu Ye in this emerging field, I utilize concepts derived from their use of Michel de Certeau and discuss these concepts in light of the works of Antonio Gramsci, Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault to show how journalists at CCTV-9 exercised control over their work, despite their function as

mouthpieces of the news and publicity system operated by the Communist Party of China and PRC government. I am not suggesting that PRC journalists are dissidents. However, my research did suggest that the mundane practice of journalism, even in so constrained a media environment as that of the PRC news system, can alter the manner in which news is made and thereby contribute to media reform. Utilizing participant observation of the CCTV-9 newsroom in 2004-2005, interviews with a range of news makers, in-house documents and a survey of content, I construct a picture of news making at CCTV-9 that foregrounds what to more macro-oriented analyses of media reform in the PRC has remained inaccessible, the minutiae of everyday life in the newsroom, and the tiny, but not inconsequential changes brought about by the ordinary work of journalists.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### OUTLINE OF THE PROBLEM

This dissertation grew out of my desire to find out how domestic journalists in the People's Republic of China (PRC)<sup>2</sup> go about their work on a daily basis. My curiosity grew out of experience in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and very early 1990s, when I had been intrigued at how good at their jobs were many of the Soviet journalists I knew, despite the often hostile regulatory and censorial environment they faced, notwithstanding glasnost. I noticed the same phenomenon at China Central Television (CCTV) where I worked as a copy editor in 1999-2000 while I was conducting field work for my Masters Thesis. Many of the Chinese journalists with whom I worked were extremely good at their jobs, dedicated to making the best news possible, and unfazed by the regulatory and censorial regimes that enabled and constrained their work.

Given the chance in 2003 to return to CCTV for an extended stay, I decided to try and answer questions that still lingered with me from my earlier visit and earlier work (see Jirik, 2004). In particular I had no answer for the manner in which journalists negotiated the pressures of the censorial and regulatory regimes and how, despite their formal subordination to powerful institutions of surveillance and control, they not only managed to do good work, but more importantly obviously had a great deal of agency in shaping their working environment and the kinds of stories they could do. Clearly, Chinese journalists were not puppets or marionettes dancing to the tune of the Central Publicity Department (CPD), which oversees censorship of media in the PRC, or the

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<sup>2</sup> I use PRC to avoid confusion with China, which I understand as an imagined entity that draws on myths of Imperial and Republican China, the PRC (including Hong Kong and Macao) and Taiwan. Chinese is used throughout as a cultural term.

State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), which is the regulatory body responsible for CCTV, in effect CCTV's parent.

After I had arrived back in Beijing to begin my dissertation research, the top level of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and SARFT ordered a relaunch of CCTV's global English-language service, CCTV-9. The aim was to transform the channel from being a comprehensive channel – which featured news, current affairs, entertainment, art and educational programming – to being a news-only channel. In addition, the authorities called for the channel, as a news channel, to provide not only insight into China, but also to provide Chinese perspective on global affairs, expanding the scope of the PRC's external publicity system, within which CCTV-9 plays a central role. In effect, the authorities wanted a PRC-based competitor to channels like CNN International (CNN-I) and the BBC World Service (BBC-WS). Management at CCTV-9 asked me to join the committee that was responsible for designing the new channel. I agreed. As a result, I was able to take part in the design and execution of the relaunch and to see up close the process of transformation at work. The relaunch was an unexpected bonus to my field research, and because of its importance for the development of the channel I made the relaunch a core focus of my dissertation.

The over-arching question I sought to answer in my work was how can one reconcile journalistic agency with the equally obvious problematic that dominates the literature about journalism in the PRC, its role as a mouthpiece for the Party<sup>3</sup> and government, and the propaganda function associated with that role? This over-arching problematic led to three broad research questions which framed my analysis:

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<sup>3</sup> Whenever I use Party with a capital 'P', I mean CPC.

- How do media institutions such as CCTV negotiate their overall relationship with the Party and government?
- How did news makers at CCTV-9 negotiate control over news making in their day to day work?
- With the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International in May 2004, over time what evidence of change emerged?

I return to these questions at the conclusion of this introductory chapter and provide intermediate questions that link the data chapters back to the research questions. But first, I want to outline the complex context that framed development of the research questions.

## CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

According to much of the English-language literature,<sup>4</sup> despite ongoing reform and changes in the structure of media management, funding and regulation that have fundamentally changed the PRC mediascape in recent decades, journalists remain subject to a range of regulatory, institutional and editorial checks on their work that increase the more closely any particular medium or story is associated with the centers of political-economic power, whether at the local, provincial or national level.

At the apex of the media system is the newspaper *People's Daily*, the *Xinhua* news agency and China Central Television (CCTV). *People's Daily* ('renmin ribao') is the CPC daily. The *Xinhua* (lit. 'New China') news agency is an institution directly under the State Council, the PRC's cabinet. CCTV produces the national nightly news *Xinwen Lianbo* ('news network'), which is the premier news program in the PRC. By any

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<sup>4</sup> I discuss the problem of language and access to materials in Chapter 6: Methodology.

measure, these media are all mouthpieces ('houshe' 喉舌)<sup>5</sup> of 'power', understood as the conjuncture of policy formulation, regulation and administration that characterizes the nexus between the Party and State in the PRC.

However, it is my contention that because of the assumed role of journalists as mouthpieces for the power structure, research on PRC media has tended to neglect the role of journalists in producing news. For decades the prevalent wisdom was that journalists did this or that because they were first and foremost Party and/or State mouthpieces. The issue of control is still central to the literature, although nuanced accounts that questioned the relationship between institutions of power and journalistic agency began to appear in the early 1990s, and have continued to appear in the interim in work by scholars such as Hugo de Burgh (2000), Huang Chengju (2000), Lee Chin-chuan (2000a) Pan Zhongdang (2000), Zhao Yuezhi (2000), Li Xiaoping (2001b), Sun Xupei (2001), Hu Zhengrong (2003), Pan Zhongdang & Lu Ye (2003), Pan Zhongdang (2005), Brecken Chinn Swartz (2006), Sun Wusan (2006) et al.<sup>6</sup>

In line with this literature, and recognizing a trend that seeks to analyze the workings of journalism as a situated and embedded practice in the PRC, I shall argue that journalistic work cannot be satisfactorily explained by analyzing only the political economy of media and/or the position and role of journalism within the power structure. Rather, the agency of journalists and their ability to exercise a great deal of control within their working environment, and shape to a degree the discourse on media reform must also be taken into account.

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<sup>5</sup> Analysts variously translate 'houshe' as 'throat and tongue' or as 'mouthpiece'. Given that 'hou' also means larynx, I prefer 'mouthpiece' since it better captures the sense of the term, even if 'throat and tongue' may be more literal.

<sup>6</sup> For the sake of consistency, I have rendered all Chinese names according to the convention of family name first and given name second, even when they appear in the literature reversed to fit the Western pattern of family name second.

## SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Part of the problem of researching journalistic agency in the PRC is that the mediascape is changing so fast that to determine what a ‘journalist’ is, let alone what they do, at any given time is difficult. As a plethora of sources point out (book-length studies include Donald, Keane, & Hong, 2002; Jia, Lu, & Heisey, 2002; Lee, 1994b, 2000f, 2003b; Sun, 2001; Zhao, 1998), the media industry, including news, is continuing to expand and evolve rapidly, sometimes led by what the literature calls the Party/State (for a discussion of this concept, see suggestions for further research, p. 462), given the deep imbrication of the former into the latter, and sometimes forcing the censorial and regulatory regimes to make constant adjustments in a bid to keep up with institutional change. In early 2005, the government noted that the PRC had some 700,000 media workers, of whom 150,000 were registered as journalists (Wang, 2006b). However, Benjamin Liebman (2005), whose work on law and media is unparalleled in the English-language material addressing that field, suggests official figures omit unlicensed journalists, while some proportion of licensed journalists do not do reporting work. In 2005, Liebman (2005) put the number of functional journalists in the PRC at “more than 500,000” (p. 8). They served television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and now increasingly the internet. Of the registered journalists, 60,000 worked in radio and television in 2005 (Xinhuanet, 2005). The television journalists worked at some 2,000<sup>7</sup> stations that serve a potential audience of at least 1.2 billion of the country’s 1.3 billion people (CCTV, 2006; Esarey, 2006, p. 2; Xie, 2003).

Looking only at broadcast television, the PRC operates a four-tiered system (central, provincial, municipal and county) (Anon., 2008; Guo, 2003b). The national, provincial and municipal levels compete head-to-head in local markets. The top tier is

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<sup>7</sup> This number is contingent on the method of counting (see p. 74).



CCTV, the nation-level monopoly broadcaster, which in 2005 had sixteen analog channels available on the mainland that reached 95.9% of the population (CCTV, 2006). The second tier is made up of at least thirty-six (2002 figures) provincial and top-tier municipal broadcasters (Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Qongqing), which have a high degree of editorial autonomy, including in news (Esarey, 2005, p. 49; Lee, 2000b; Lynch, 1999; Zhao, 1998, the latter three authors cited in Esarey, 2005 p.42 note 16). Given this cursory description of the scope of the field journalism research attempts to address, clearly much space exists for clarification.

#### **CONTEXTUALIZED AND CONCRETIZED RESEARCH**

Given the size and complexity of the PRC's mediascape and the pace of change in recent decades, by the mid-1990s scholars working outside the PRC had begun to jettison earlier theories, particularly the work on mass persuasion and propaganda that characterized early attempts to analyze media in socialist and communist countries. Critics (Chen, 2002; Lee, 2000f; Ma, 2000; Zhao, 1998) of the mass persuasion and propaganda model noted its ideological baggage, rooted as it was in an idealized vision of what the so-called 'Western' news model allegedly was not, and the subsequent failure of the theory to account for the rise of market-driven media within an authoritarian socialist system. A seminal moment in the re-thinking of PRC media occurred in 1994, when Lee Chin-chuan (1994a) called for a "contextualized and concretized" understanding of the PRC's changing mediascape, arguing pointedly that the existing models bore little relationship to the reality of the PRC's changing media, and that researchers should begin with specific examples and build theories on the basis of evidence, rather than ideology.

Although Lee's call resonated with much of the research community, the task of providing detailed and nuanced accounts of news-making inside the PRC has proven

difficult. Problems of access, language (for some), the size of the topic, etc., have all combined to limit the kind of research he called for, although a veritable industry in Chinese media studies operates in the PRC and Hong Kong and to a lesser degree elsewhere, including in the United States. The best of these studies have made penetrating insights into the general condition of the expansion of commercialization under which all media develop in the PRC. However, until the late 1990s, scholars' overestimation of the power of the market to bring about democratic political change had led many analysts to underestimate the Party's growing accommodation of the market, and instrumentalization of the market as a legitimating factor in the Party's continued rule and dominance.

The researcher credited with overturning this assumption in the literature was Zhao Yuezhi (1998), whose *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line* was a sobering rejoinder to much of the field's infatuation with the market. Zhao consciously applied Lee's call for "contextualized and concretized" research, while introducing a paradigm derived from critical political economy and British cultural studies. Her work has since become indispensable for understanding the continued hegemony of the Party and the increasingly corporate relationship between Party and State, media and market in the PRC.

In 2003, Lee acknowledged the influence of Zhao's work, although he remains reluctant to admit the broader contribution of the PRC's New Left, with whom she shares a loose affiliation, to an understanding of the corporatization of power in the PRC as the Party increasingly embraces the market (Lee, 2003b, p. 23; for an introduction to the PRC's New Left, see Liu, 2004).

If Zhao's approach was to examine the structural relationship of the Party/State, media and market, a second approach to concretized and contextualized research has

been to focus on the newsroom and work of journalists. The sociology of journalism in the PRC is exemplified in the works of Pan Zhongdang (2000; 2005), He Zhou (2000c; 2003), Li Xiaoping (2001b) et al. A third approach has been historical. Judith Polumbaum (1990), Hugo De Burgh (2000; 2003a; 2003b) and Lee (2004) typify a nuanced attention to history that added depth to the sociological and political economic approaches. Within the trajectory of these works, the conception of the journalist shifts over time from the passive dupe of the authorities associated with mass persuasion and propaganda theory to a sense that control in the newsroom is contested and negotiated. In particular, the recent work of Pan & Lu Ye (2003) and Pan (2005) analyzes the negotiation of innovation and provides an important insight into the agency of journalists in shaping their working environment and the institutional development of their field.

#### **INSTRUMENTAL POWER AND JOURNALISTIC AGENCY**

Following Lee (1994a), Zhao (1998), Pan & Lu (2003) and Pan (2005), in this work I attempt to provide a contextualized and concretized account of the work of journalists at a single media site by developing a case study of a single newsroom, that of CCTV International (CCTV-9 or CCTV-I).<sup>8</sup> CCTV-9 is CCTV's 24-hour global English-language service. Although an expanding literature (Guo & Sang, 2003; Jirik, 2000, 2004; Liu, 2006) has taken CCTV-9 as its object of analysis, the changing character of the channel justified further research. In particular, I focus on the relaunch on May 3, 2004 of CCTV-9 as CCTV International.

The rationale for a sustained focus on the relaunch derives from CCTV's own attitude to the exercise. According to CCTV-9's Controller (Managing Director) at the time, the relaunch was a significant change of direction for the channel, the introduction

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<sup>8</sup> I use CCTV-9 to label the channel pre- and post-relaunch, unless I am making a comparison between the channel pre- and post-relaunch. In that case, I use CCTV-I to refer to the channel post-relaunch.

of a rolling news service, and a shift in orientation away from being a window on China to also being a window on the world, a channel that would provide Chinese perspective on international events as well (Jiang & Liu, 2004).

The relaunch followed the intervention of CPC Central Committee Political Bureau Standing Committee Member Li Changchun, one of the PRC's eight top leaders at the time, into the development of what the Party calls external publicity or 'wai xuan'.<sup>9</sup> Li, who at the time of writing was the Politburo member in overall charge of publicity, was on a trip to Latin America in July 2003 when he remarked that the people of the region should have better access to information about the PRC and that the PRC could use its own CNN. On his return to Beijing, that comment apparently put in motion the process that resulted in the CCTV-9 relaunch, as well as the launch on October 1, 2004 of a combined Spanish and French channel with global distribution.<sup>10</sup>

According to my interlocutors at CCTV, the idea that CCTV-9 could compete globally with CNN, or more specifically CNN International, was originally met with derision and consternation at CCTV, which considered itself ill-prepared for the challenge. However, given that Li's directive could not be ignored and moreover gave senior management<sup>11</sup> leverage with which to strengthen CCTV-9's position within the CCTV stable of channels, the challenge was accepted.

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<sup>9</sup> 'Wai xuan' can be translated as 'external publicity' or 'external propaganda.' Chinese does not distinguish between the two terms.

<sup>10</sup> I have put together this version of the genesis of CCTV International from the combined input of a number of CCTV personnel. None of their accounts fully tallied with one another, so I have made do with what appeared common in the different versions of the story. Following is typical: "I heard that Li Changchun was in South America watching television in a hotel and he didn't see any news from China, and he said 'why don't we have a Chinese CNN?'"

<sup>11</sup> I use the term 'management' throughout to refer to staff at the level of the Editorial Board (see Figure 4, p. 258). By 'senior management', I mean staff at the level of Deputy Controller and above. Management can also refer to senior management, and senior management can refer to managers above the level of CCTV-9 within CCTV.

What Li meant by CNN must also be understood. Given that the Party operates from a Leninist perspective on media, which sees media as an instrument of the power structure, by “China’s CNN” Li was not arguing that CCTV-9 should be developed as a global news channel with editorial independence from political oversight, subject only to the demands of the market. On the contrary, from what is known about how the PRC leadership views media like CNN, apparently it views them as little different from PRC media, i.e. as instruments of political power. For example when Deng Xiaoping was criticizing foreign coverage of the 1989 Tiananmen incident, one source cites him as saying:

The causes of this incident have to do with the global context. The Western world, especially the United States, has thrown its entire propaganda machine into agitation work and has given a lot of encouragement and assistance to the so-called democrats or opposition in China – people who in fact are the scum of the Chinese nation. This is the root of the chaotic situation we face today. When the West stirs up turmoil in other countries, in fact it is playing power politics – hegemonism – and is only trying to control those countries, to pull into its power sphere countries that were previously beyond its control (Nathan, Link, & Zhang (compiler), 2002, p. 472).

Moreover, in the *Tiananmen Papers* (Nathan, Link, & Zhang (compiler), 2002), source of the above quote, the government’s media monitors appear to make no attempt to distinguish between foreign media such as CNN and *Voice of America*. They lump them all together in the reports compiled for the leadership from the foreign press, which, according to the book’s editors, were the “most instructive items in the leaders’ intelligence flow” (Nathan, Link, & Zhang (compiler), 2002, p. xli). Whether this latter claim was the case is debatable. What is not is the non-contradiction for the PRC leadership of news media that are factual and accurate in what they report, if unbalanced

and partial in choosing what to report and what not to report, serving both as a source of information and a political instrument.<sup>12</sup>

In the case of CCTV-9, whether the term “China’s CNN” or e.g. “Voice of China” therefore better characterizes the channel is a moot point, since the leadership does not distinguish between the two. From discussions with CCTV management and conversations with journalists, Li clearly wanted CCTV-9 developed as an instrument of global influence, or ‘soft power’ in the sense that Joseph Nye (2004) uses the term. This suggests the government sees CCTV-9 primarily as an ideological instrument even if that vision was at odds with the multiple visions many of CCTV’s and CCTV-9’s management and personnel had about how the channel should develop.

I am not suggesting here that CCTV-9 was bristling with radicals or was a hotbed of dissidence, nor that it could compete with the premier news programs on CCTV’s Mandarin-language channels,<sup>13</sup> or the dedicated news channel, CCTV News, launched on July 1, 2003. On the contrary, the overall tenor of CCTV-9’s work was unremarkable, even conservative compared to the programming of many other channels not only within CCTV, but within the PRC. However, even unremarkable and conservative work can have an effect, and through their quiet insistence on developing journalism that was more than a mouthpiece for the Party and government, the journalists at CCTV-9 were playing their own small role in a much bigger reform of media that has been ongoing since at least the mid-1980s, although, as I shall argue, its roots go back to the reform movements

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<sup>12</sup> Of course, an entire literature is devoted to making the same point about media such as CNN, that mainstream Western news media ARE instruments of power. In general, I am sympathetic to that literature, and would consider it a misuse of my work to contrast my findings with an idealized version of the Western news model, represented by e.g. CNN or the BBC World Service.

<sup>13</sup> Of these programs, the highest rating is *Focus* (‘jiaodian fangtan’), which airs nightly on CCTV-1 after *Xinwen Lianbo* and the national weather forecast. Other examples of respected CCTV news programs are *Economic News Half-Hour* (‘jingji bange xiaoshi’) on the economics channel, CCTV-2, and *Tell It Like It Is* (‘shi shuo shi hua’) on the 24-hour news channel. For an excellent discussion of the development of CCTV’s news channel, see Dong (2007).

that swept the last Emperor out of power in 1911. In short, in their vision for the channel, journalists at CCTV-9 were drawing on a long and venerable history of the development of journalism in Imperial and Republican China and the PRC, before the Party possibly derailed this process in calling for the creation of “China’s CNN.”

Much of the outcome of the change in direction effected at CCTV-9 in May 2004 remained unclear at the time of writing. Much depends on decisions taken at the level of the central authorities. However, much also depends on how CCTV-9 implements these decisions, since what was clear to me in doing this research was that many personnel at CCTV and at CCTV-9 were unwilling partners in harnessing CCTV-9 to any vision for the channel’s development that would further undermine the already limited autonomy of journalists in a system where journalists have long been chafing against the leash of the central authorities.

#### **RATIONALE FOR DOING THIS DISSERTATION**

A case study of CCTV-9 with an emphasis on the work of the news department is an appropriate topic for a PhD dissertation, as little is known about the minutiae of news production in the PRC, although the bigger picture from the perspective of the political economy of media reform is fairly clear. A lot has been written about PRC media and about news in particular. But the actual process of production, the manner in which news makers assemble stories and under what conditions, remains something of a mystery except to those working in news production sites.

Because of the formal subordination of news media to the Party and State, analysis of the institutional position of news-making within the PRC power system is usually assumed to account for content. As a result, much of the literature tends to treat everything in between the political, economic and cultural contexts of news production

and the output as something of a black box. Very rarely are journalists asked why they are doing what they are doing. As a result, the inputs and institutional and organizational issues associated with news-making in the PRC tend to be taken for granted. Within the news-making system, journalists are denied more than token agency.

What comes out of the black box is well-known. Analysis of the content of PRC news is well-established in the literature (see Jia, Lu, & Heisey, 2002; Lee, 1994b, 2000f; Zhao, 1998, et al. as a starting point). Research paradigms range from the propaganda and mass persuasion model that dominated the field in its early days to increasing recognition of diversity in media, including in news (Lee, 2000a, 2001; Wu, 2000; Zhao, 1999 et al.; Zhao, 1996). Against the dominant early trend of treating news media as mouthpieces of the Party and government, today analysts such as Zhao (2008) point to “ideological pluralism” and Zhao Bin<sup>14</sup> (1999) to “unintended ideological pluralism” (p. 293) to account for the contradictory messages proliferating in PRC news.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the greater understanding of PRC media these more nuanced approaches bring, researchers still tend to analyze diversity within PRC media primarily, if not purely, in terms of the changing news-making environment, especially the tension between political oversight and commercialization. In particular, analysts focus on the contradiction between continued Party/State control of media and the shift from state subsidies to advertising as the primary revenue base for media. The resultant studies (Chan, 1994, 1995, 2000; Chang & Chen, 2000; He, 2000b; Jia, Lu, & Heisey, 2002; Lee, 1994a, 2000b, 2000d, 2001, 1994b; Zhao, 1998 et al.) have provided many insights into the changing political and economic contexts of news-making, and

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<sup>14</sup> Professor Zhao served for a period of time as a member of my PhD dissertation committee while I was doing fieldwork for the dissertation. During my time at CCTV-9, she joined the channel as a presenter of ‘Documentary’. While I am very grateful for her insights and assistance, none of my analysis or conclusions should necessarily be attributed to her. My analysis and whatever errors are entirely my own.



their correlation in the changing character of content. But in news studies, the day-to-day affairs of the newsroom remain the missing link.

This is not to suggest that visits to newsrooms and interviews with or surveys of news makers and media managers are uncommon in the literature. A range of studies (Lee, 2000e; Li, 1993; Li, 2001b; Pan, 2000; Sun, 2006; Swartz, 2006; Wu, 2000; Zhao, 1998 et al.) provides a rich complement to the more macro-oriented analyzes of the contexts of news-making. They provide solid evidence of the increasing contradictions of the news-making environment and the effect these contradictions have on news makers' work. In addition, several texts provide excellent interview-based insights into newsroom work (Huang, 2000; Li, 2001b; Sun, 2006; Swartz, 2006; Tong, 2007; Zhao, 1996 et al.). But systematic, long-term observation of the newsroom is rare.

Several reasons either separately or in different combinations could account for this lack. Firstly, as I noted above, emphasis on news as a Party and government mouthpiece has oriented research to assuming that the presumed source of the message accounts for the content. The news-making process largely is taken for granted, given the assumption that news makers remain, in the final analysis, transmission instruments for the "Party line."

Secondly, to the degree that the mouthpiece metaphor is apt, the problem of access to newsrooms in the PRC might be presumed to be complex, although my own experience suggested the opposite. CCTV management was not averse to having somebody look closely at the newsroom, I imagine in the hope that I would produce a more nuanced account than the 'China bashing' that characterizes much anecdotal evidence about working at CCTV.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The best known example of this kind of 'China bashing' is a look back at her experience at CCTV-9 by former copy editor Joan Maltese (2003). However, a number of other former or current of CCTV-9's

Thirdly, news makers in the PRC may have a special reluctance to speak openly about what they do, given the political sensitivity of their work, and the danger of crossing an ever-shifting line about what is permissible. However, I found this latter barrier not to be the case at CCTV-9. I found my Chinese interlocutors eager to participate. They seemed to see my work as a chance for them to put on record an account of their work. If anything, the foreigners I dealt with in the news-making process at CCTV-9 were more suspicious and felt they had more to lose by speaking to me than did my Chinese colleagues.

Finally, case studies take time, making a dissertation a time commitment that few researchers can afford. I solved this problem by taking a job at the channel. I spent two-and-a-half years working at CCTV-9 between mid-2003 and late 2005. I was hired as a ‘foreign expert,’ a categorization the State Administration of Foreign Expert Affairs (SAFEA) uses for bringing in non-PRC nationals to work in certain state-owned enterprises and institutions such as universities or within the administration. I worked as a copy editor, consultant to management and adviser to several of the production teams, including the reporting team, and as a trainer of some of the journalists and writers.

Working and doing research at CCTV was my second stay at the organization. In 1999-2000 I also worked as a copy editor in the English department at CCTV, when it was part of a joint Mandarin & English language channel, CCTV-4 (Jirik, 2000, 2004). In 2000, CCTV-4 was split. CCTV-4 became a global 24-hour Mandarin language channel. On September 25 that year, CCTV-9 was launched. Although this dissertation focuses on CCTV-9, my earlier visit provided a valuable starting point. Therefore my results here

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foreign staff either maintain blogs or contribute to the lively blogosphere in the PRC with a strange mixture of pride and self-loathing about their work at the channel.

contribute to an emerging longitudinal picture of the development of English-language programming at CCTV that could be of value for future research.

A second and perhaps more urgent reason for returning to CCTV was a nagging sense of incompleteness associated with my MA thesis. When I published my earlier study of the CCTV English News, I wrote:

Keeping in mind that most successful Chinese journalists are Party members or members of the Communist Youth League, direct supervision of their work by state or Party officials, other than media managers, is rare. Difficult coverage decisions are usually left to management. *During my time at CCTV, I saw only a couple of instances of interference.* (Jirik, 2004, pp. 134, italics added)

I was being very careful in writing this paragraph, well aware that what one sees and what is the case might be different, even extremely different. I knew at the time I was opening myself to the charge of naivety. However, I was concerned and remain concerned that too much analysis of Chinese media remains ideological, steeped in the assumptions of the research traditions it represents, and concerned to mount a political argument for institutional change in the guise of academic debate.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, I have had doubts ever since my first visit to CCTV whether I had not fallen into the very trap I was seeking to avoid. I.e. how ‘ideological’ was my own research? Had a desire to show the similarities between PRC and Western newsrooms blinded me to the day-to-day exercise of control over the newsroom by external agencies such as SARFT and the CPD?

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<sup>16</sup> One sees a similar trend currently gathering pace with respect to the PRC with a flood of ‘institutional’ interest, in particular from the United States, in ‘helping’ bring ‘rule of law’ to the country. While the Chinese have recognized rule by law as a much-needed palliative to the arbitrary exercise of power, I doubt whether US-style rule of law is what the Party has in mind or what the country needs. PRC media research and media reform have been blighted by decades of political struggle to undermine ‘communism’, masked as academic debate. The PRC’s fledgling legal establishment would do well to study the history of PRC media research to avoid similar pitfalls.

Criticism by Anne Marie Brady (2006) that “[p]ropaganda and thought work in China since the events in Tiananmen Square in 1989 has been much underestimated and downplayed” ( p. 59) by twenty-two researchers she lists, including myself, suggests that the question of control was one worth returning to. Brady’s (2002; 2005a; 2005b; 2006) research provides much-needed insight into the structure and workings of China’s foremost agencies of censorship and media control. However, I am not convinced that accounting for the structural relationship of the Party and government to media more than partially accounts for the dynamics of power in PRC media development.

Nor am I convinced in the implied contrast in this kind of research that the supposed independence of Western media is borne out when the concept of power in both systems is broadened to account for the cosy relationship between governments and mainstream media, regardless of the formal separation of media and state, whether through public service-type charters or commercialization of media. Bracketing that debate, which I have touched on elsewhere (Jirik, 2004) and accepting Brady’s (2006) findings that the work of the likes of Harold Lasswell et al. on propaganda have become key texts for guiding the work of media monitors and regulators in the PRC today, I ask whether deployment of Lasswell translates into control in the newsroom, or alternately does the use of Lasswell suggest that the CPD and other institutions of propaganda and media control are falling out of touch with the situation inside the PRC’s media institutions, including inside the country’s newsrooms?

Given the complexity and uncertainty of the PRC’s ‘reform and opening up’ initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, analyzing control at CCTV-9 would give me the opportunity to investigate how Brady’s (2006) analysis plays out, whether power is contested and if so, how media managers and journalists negotiate control in the workplace, a topic that has produced some excellent literature in recent years (He, 2004;

He, 2000c, 2003; Hu, 2003; Pan, 2005; Pan & Lu, 2003; Sun, 2006). In particular, I would draw attention to Sun Wusan's (2006) account of the manner in which a small television station in the PRC defied central plans for reform that would undermine local autonomy. Sun's (2006 p. 43) account is all the more striking for reference to a general boycott by county-level television stations across the country of a 1999 policy designed to recentralize control of the broadcast system, forcing the center to retract the policy after three years. As Sun (2006) concludes:

the Chinese broadcasting system does not work as an administrative pyramid or as a unified whole. Dispute and conflict take place at every corner. To refer ... to Foucault, there is an unstable centre, uncounted points of collision, and conflicts and struggle arise at every point. (p. 54)

Although Sun's (2006) work was published after I had done my research, I sensed a similar uncertainty during my time in Beijing. In spending two plus years at CCTV-9, I was aiming in my research for what Clifford Geertz (1973) calls "thick description," in this case an attempt to provide as full and contextualized a picture of the news-making process as possible. In particular, drawing on my observations and interviews and on the work of a range of theorists, as my research progressed, I became concerned to problematize any easy understanding of the newsroom as a passive instrument of the Party's and government's will.

### **THEORIZING JOURNALISTIC AGENCY**

Lasswell is famously associated with the description of mass communications research as the task of analyzing "who says what in which channel to whom with what effect." As a founder of the transmission theory of communication, he assumed strong media effects and a passive audience. According to Brady (2005b), Lasswell:

is extremely influential in present day China, 'unseen engineers' were needed to manipulate public opinion. These were 'a corps of experts, people who specialise

in the analysis and management of public opinion' who were dealing with a 'fundamentally illogical public and therefore must learn to identify and master those techniques of communication that would have the most compelling effect on public attitudes and thinking.'

This description of the public might accord with how the CPD and SARFT see PRC audiences. It might even accord with how professional communicators such as journalists see their audiences. But is this kind of understanding of the communication process any less discredited because one is investigating the PRC? I doubt it. A cultural approach to communication and active audience research might suggest a high degree of agency for media users, even if, as the case may sometimes be in the PRC, the only choice is to turn off the television. Although this would not invalidate Brady's (2005b; 2006) findings, perhaps deploying Lasswell is not having the effect intended by the CPD.

By way of illustration, the national nightly news and the broadcast most carefully regulated by the CPD, *Xinwen Lianbo*, goes to air each evening on CCTV at 7pm and is relayed by most provincial, municipal and county level channels. Between 2001 and 2003, the audience for *Xinwen Lianbo* fell from about 360 million nightly to just over 270 million, a loss of some 90 million viewers or twenty-five percent of its audience (Jirik, 2003). By early 2007, the audience had shrunk to 135 million, a loss of a further 50 percent of the remaining audience (Associated Press, 2007). The disappearing audience for *Xinwen Lianbo* triggered something of a crisis and some soul-searching at CCTV. Not least it opened up ways for news makers at CCTV to experiment with new formats and styles of presentation (Straits Times, 2006). Moreover it strengthened management's hand against the CPD in the struggle to define what news should be in the PRC (Dong & Shi, 2007).

Bracketing the audience, which is not a focus of this dissertation, I was concerned to investigate the complex relationship that links news makers, news institutions, and

external organs of the Party/State and their agencies of regulation and control. In particular I wanted to investigate issues of control, both as an empowering and disempowering process, and what kinds of resistance, if any, news makers deployed and to what ends, in their day to day work. Taking as my starting point the extant literature, I want to suggest that in order to better understand what journalists do, we need to rethink our understanding of the power structure and the position and role of media within this structure.

I am not suggesting that journalists are somehow in opposition to the central or even lesser Party and government authorities. PRC media are state-controlled. Media are part of the power system. Rather, I want to investigate whether journalists can be shown to exercise even limited relative autonomy in the workplace. If so, then the workplace as a site of social agency is not simply an instrument of the authorities. Moreover, might this not suggest that negotiation and contestation of power are the norm in the workplace, rather than the exception? I draw on the works of (in alphabetical order) Pierre Bourdieu, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci to make my case. The theme relevant to my work that links these four theorists is a concern with power, and the relationship between structure and agency.

Bourdieu (1999; 2005a) is particularly useful for institutional analysis, foregrounding in the concepts of ‘field’ and ‘habitus’ a way of analyzing the range of possible actions of agents in any given institutional arrangement and political, economic, technological and cultural order in which institutions are embedded. Bourdieu (2005a, pp. 32-33) developed the concept of field to discuss the role of producers in their work, and by so doing address the question Spinoza asked of hermeneutics, how could the sacred texts be understood without reference to their authors understood as historically and culturally embedded social agents.

Bourdieu (2005a, pp. 32-33) was concerned with contextual rather than textual analysis, which could not escape the double avoidance of the agent, whether in an immanent reading of the text or the crude reduction of the agent to the objective conditions of her production. Bourdieu (2005a) states that “a field is a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these position-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field” (p. 30). A field is a “research tool, the main function of which is to enable the scientific construction of social objects” (Bourdieu, 2005a, p. 30). The journalistic field is the space of play of the institutions that represent the political, economic, cultural and technological disposition of forces that enable and constrain news making.

Moreover, in his discussion of the journalistic field, Bourdieu (2005a) argues that it is important to focus not on journalists, but on “the structure of the journalistic field and the mechanisms that operate within it” (pp. 41-42). Thus, Bourdieu’s solution to the structure agency relationship was to avoid the dualism implied and seek instead the propensity for actions to be taken in the context of the conditions of their possibility. This relationship is expressed in habitus, a “socialized subjectivity” (Benson & Neveu, 2005, p. 3) that is a “structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perceptions of practices, but also a structured structure ... systematic configurations of properties expressing differences objectively inscribed in conditions of existence” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170).

In the PRC, the structuring forces that operated in the journalistic field at CCTV-9 included the higher authorities within CCTV, the routines of news making, socialization into the rhythms of the work place, the social agency of news makers as workers playing



a particular role in the production process, and the imagined audience and real viewer feedback on management priorities.

‘Field’ and ‘habitus’ provide powerful tools for addressing the particular conditions under which news making proceeds in the PRC. However, as Certeau (1984) notes, certain regularities escape Bourdieu’s sociology despite his fully relational explanation of practice. Certeau’s (1984) concern rests on the sociological character of Bourdieu’s work. He argues that statistical investigation finds only the homogenous, and misses the trajectories, which “trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop” (p. xviii). Certeau (1984) is suggesting what amounts to habitus in the multiple, a disposition to act not only in a particular way but also in ways quite contrary to those prescribed by the structuring structure and structured structure of their possibility, but a product and condition of those relationships nevertheless.

In particular, Certeau (1984) is concerned to develop a “science of singularity” that would investigate “the relationship that links everyday pursuits to particular circumstances” (p. ix). In short, I understand Certeau (1984) as being concerned to re-introduce the contingency of practice into habitus over and against its regularity in Bourdieu’s formulation. Moreover, a science of singularity is concerned not with contingency as an accident but with contingency as the “subtle logic” of ordinary activities “within a grid of socio-economic constraints,” which “comes to light only in the details,” but always expresses a struggle for life (tactics), an aesthetic (creativity) and an ethics (autonomous initiative) (Certeau, 1984, p. ix). Certeau’s (1984) account of the practice of everyday life is a response both to Bourdieu and to Michel Foucault’s (1977) account of disciplinary society.

Certeau (1984, pp. 45-49) accepts Foucault's account of the disciplinary procedures that were perfected in the army and schools and generalized as procedures applicable to any institution through the elevation of visibility to a technology of control in the form of the panopticon. In the case of the PRC, the concept of the panopticon is an appropriate metaphor for the institutional relationship between the media and the power structure, especially media's relationship with the Central Publicity Department, given its role in surveillance, discipline and where necessary punishment of journalists, and SARFT, given its regulatory role in journalistic work. But Certeau (1984) asks what of other procedures that "have not given rise to a discursive configuration or to a technological systematization? They could be considered as an *immense* reserve constituting either the beginnings or traces of *different developments*" (pp. 47-48). He continues: "It is in any case impossible to reduce the functioning of a society to a dominant type of procedures... Beneath what one might call the "monotheistic" privilege that panoptic apparatuses have won for themselves, a "*polytheism*" of *scattered practices* survives, dominated but not erased by the triumphal success of one of their number" (Certeau, 1984, p. 48). These scattered practices constitute the tactics of resistance that Certeau is concerned to show operate in conjunction with the strategies of power.

The first scholars to deploy Certeau in the analysis of PRC media were Pan & Lu (2003). They deploy Certeau's (1984) account of the 'tactics' of the weak (journalists) over and against the 'strategies' of the institutions that frame their work. In this way, Pan & Lu (2003) seek to account for the manner in which "power operates in everyday life" (p. 217) in news work and the manner in which journalists resist, appropriate and evade the established order. Rather than a monolithic apparatus of control before which journalists tremble in fear, to paraphrase Certeau, Pan & Lu (2003) show how journalists use the disciplinary and regulatory procedures imposed by the panopticon for ends other

than those intended. They subvert them from within, “not by rejecting them or transforming them... but by many different ways of using them in the service of rules, customs or convictions” functional to a discourse different to that for which they were intended. Pan & Lu’s (2003) use of Certeau aids an understanding of the manner in which journalists both reproduce yet contest the dominant hegemony in the PRC, even as they consent to that domination. In the banality of their workaday lives, they exert an inexorable if barely felt force on the dominant hegemony, shaping and changing it even as they reproduce it.

The concept of hegemony is associated with Gramsci (1971), who argues that the ruling classes maintain their control over society through gaining, over time and not without cost, the consent of the ruled classes to domination. Zhao (1998) has used theories associated with Gramsci and their later development within critical cultural studies to show how the Party has maintained its grip on power in the PRC, despite commercialization, through engaging with the market and linking its legitimacy to success in developing the economy. For Gramsci, writing primarily about Italy in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the core institutions functional to the ability of the ruling classes to maintain their hegemony were the church, trade unions and the schools (Gramsci, 1971, p. 56). However, a range of post-Gramscian theorists have extended that set where warranted to include other institutions, including media.

The core of Gramsci’s theory is Marxian, pointing to the embedded character of the journalistic field in the broader political and cultural economy. Drawing on the extant literature, I shall argue that journalists in late Imperial China, Republican China and the PRC were and remain members of the intellectual strata, and hence deeply imbricated in the Chinese system of governance. Gramsci argues that intellectuals “are the dominant group’s “deputies” exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political

government” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). Journalists in the PRC have inherited the traditional role of the intellectual in China, which I shall argue was to function as both an instrument and critic of the power structure. Moreover, as Zhao has shown in the case of the PRC, journalists today are also part of the burgeoning middle class. As such, journalists have a vested interest in championing the market. Therefore, they are inclined to consent to the Party’s hegemony in so far as it serves their own nascent class interest, but only in so far as their consciences, the product of what I tentatively call a ‘Confucian habitus’, permit.

According to Gramsci, in the hegemonic process, the negotiation of consent is ongoing, hence the potential exists for an outcome that is not decided a priori by the political, economic and institutional structures where power is exercised and legitimized. In short, hegemony presupposes agency and the possibility of unintended outcomes. Such an understanding of hegemony comes very close to the dimension of contingency in everyday practice that Certeau (1984) introduces as a corollary to the concept of habitus in Bourdieu.

So, what I am seeking to achieve in this dissertation is an understanding – at a specific media site (CCTV-9) within a specific ‘field’ understood in the sense Bourdieu (2005a) uses the term – of the practice of negotiating what Gramsci (1971) calls hegemony through the application of what Certeau (1984) calls tactics against the institutional strategies of the CPD and SARFT in a bid to recover for journalism some sense of how it is that the everyday practices of media-making, which piecemeal amount to little in and of themselves, can be thought of as contributing to the generalized discourse of power in the Foucauldean sense. Such an analysis should improve understanding of how change happens, even in systems characterized by a preponderance of top-down control.

Without such an understanding, systemic reconfiguration, whether radical or gradual, will constantly surprise, suggesting external pressure, unforeseen processes and/or the intended or unintended consequences of acts originating only in the power structure. Against this understanding, I see systemic reconfiguration as the result of a drawn out and barely visible process of the constant negotiation and contestation of power, played out at myriad sites in mundane practices that amount to little when considered in isolation, but which can snowball with bewildering momentum into the kind of confrontation witnessed between 1989 and 1991 across Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and the PRC (symbolized by Tiananmen) when historical conditions permit. In Gramscian terms this kind of qualitative reconfiguration of the dominant hegemony can occur when the balance of forces shifts away from strategy and the ‘war of position’ favored by the power structure, to tactics and the ‘war of maneuver’ favored by historically weaker parties, leading to rupture.

In attempting to understand the contestation and negotiation of control in the PRC, analogy with the work of media in the waning days of the former Soviet Union is suggestive. Any honest account of the collapse of the Soviet Union wastes little effort seeking prophets of doom, but rather asks in anguish why, except in hindsight, so few, including many of the best minds in the fields of political science, diplomacy and media, saw it coming. Even today nuanced accounts of *perestroika* and *glasnost* disagree as to the appropriate weight to accord the different agents of change, whether for example in the case of public discourse mainstream media or samizdat played the more important role.<sup>17</sup> Suffice to say that in the Soviet Union, the government newspaper *Izvestiya* (‘the news’) and Russian republican television played quite different roles in the final days of

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<sup>17</sup> See Horvath (2005) for an excellent introduction to this ongoing argument.

the regime than did the Communist Party mouthpieces, the newspaper *Pravda* ('truth') and the national nightly television news, *Vremya* ('time') on the monopoly national broadcaster, Ostankino.

I am making the analogy with the role of media in the Soviet Union, because an understanding of the role mainstream media played there in stimulating change, even if the result unintentionally was collapse, can improve understanding of how mainstream journalists in the PRC are affecting change from below. In short, by studying what journalists do, one can begin to see how power in the localization of its manifestations in hegemonic discourses plays out in a situated context and embedded practices.

This is not, however, to suggest that the PRC is about to collapse,<sup>18</sup> or that the Party/State through its agents the CPD and SARFT, and the market through its agent, ratings, do not determine the limits of media reform. Rather, I am concerned to argue that capillary power, small power, seemingly inconsequential power, what Foucault calls the "microphysics of power" (Rabinow, 1984, p. 174) always has an effect. And I shall further suggest that if the true measure of this almost invisible power is given by its accumulation at the myriad workplaces in the PRC where it plays out, then we shall have gained some insight into how hegemony works in the PRC, even if at each particular site, the preponderance of top-down power is overwhelming and any negotiation of consent to its domination is almost always but never quite inconsequential to the overall balance of forces.

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<sup>18</sup> Although the bewildering speed with which the USSR collapsed, and the almost complete lack of warning, does suggest how insubstantial in reality can be something such as a country or political system that seems so substantial just before it proves itself to be otherwise.

## GLOBALIZATION & HYBRIDIZATION

As one media site shaped by those forces, the reconfiguration of CCTV-9 as CCTV International under impact of its further development as an instrument of ‘wai xuan’ occurred in the context of the ‘going out’ project, a long term strategy launched in 2001 to make the PRC’s external publicity internationally competitive (Liu, 2006; Xu, 2002). The ‘going out’ project has three stages: 1) to restructure the whole external publicity industry under the leadership of the Central Committee and increase links with government departments responsible for culture, tourism, the economy, and education (timeline - two years); 2) to establish conglomerates based on *Xinhua*, CCTV and China Radion International (CRI), and the overseas edition of *People’s Daily* (timeline - five years); 3) to meet the final goal to create a position for the PRC’s overseas information system commensurate with the PRC’s overall standing in the world (timeline - ten years) (Zhang, 2004).

The ‘going out’ project is part of the PRC’s globalization within modernity, which, in line with authors such as Liu Kang (2004) and Li Xiaojiang (2001a) I shall argue began in 1978 with Deng Xiaoping’s policy of reform and opening up. The PRC’s globalization then accelerated in 1992, when Deng ended further debate about political reform in the wake of Tiananmen and set the PRC firmly on the road to an indigenous form of state and non-state capitalism called ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’.

The PRC is a problematic topic for globalization theory. As a number of theorists have noted, the ability of the CPC to appropriate and accommodate capitalism without ceding state power, including its regulatory power over media, to the market, suggests the emphasis on globalization as a process that removes barriers to external flows is at best a partial account of the complex dynamics at work. I discuss this at length below. However, here, I want to note that I shall be arguing that what characterizes the PRC’s

encounter with globalization is a process of hybridization that can be traced through Imperial and Republican China's and then the PRC's encounter with the world outside the borders of these quite different states. Hybridization is therefore a central and recurring motif of this dissertation.

Kraidy (2005) has given us perhaps the best summary to date of hybridization, which he is concerned to strengthen through the concept of 'critical transculturalism.' I am less concerned to enter the debate over fine tuning the concept than to acknowledge what Kraidy and other authors before him have concluded: that 'hybridization' is a key concept for understanding globalization.

The relevance of hybridization for understanding the PRC's globalization should not be under-estimated, despite the dominant hegemony within PRC cultural and media policy, which constructs Imperial and Republican China, the PRC and Taiwan as part of a single monolithic entity, China, which has existed for five thousand years, peopled predominantly by the Han with a host of minor ethnicities playing different roles, including leading roles, throughout history. It is not my intention to enter this debate. Rather, I accept Kai-wing Chow's (2001) analysis of the epistemic break that separates off Imperial China from modernity and use his insights to construct a framework for understanding hybridization in the development of media in late Imperial and then Republican China and finally the PRC.

Although hybridization usually refers to cultural mutation of one form or another, at a more mundane level the concept is relevant to a channel such as CCTV-9, which mixes news and external publicity; is heir to the history of news and broadcasting in the PRC, yet welcomes consultants from entities such as Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation; in its everyday work mixes Chinese and foreign staff; mixes international and domestic source material in its stories; is broadcast locally and globally; and caters to



an audience of Chinese and foreigners. Kraidy (2005) notes that hybridity (hybridization) “invokes the fusion of two (or more) components into a third term irreducible to the sum of its parts” (p. 66). It is this CCTV-9 that I hope to invoke in this dissertation.

## **OUTLINE OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

My aim in this work is to construct a complex picture at CCTV-9 of news making as a social practice situated and embedded in the institutional relationship between media makers and the power structure, contextualized by the political economy and history of PRC media development. The broad research questions outlined above (and reproduced here) led to the following intermediate questions, which link the data chapters to the research questions:

- How do media institutions such as CCTV negotiate their overall relationship with the Party and government? This question was dealt with primarily in Chapter 7, which analyzes the May 2004 relaunch of CCTV-9 and outlines the manner in which management negotiated the demand for transformation associated with the relaunch of the channel as CCTV International. The chapter answers two intermediate questions that followed from the relaunch:
  - What are CCTV-9 and CCTV International?
  - How did CCTV-9 negotiate the demand to relaunch CCTV-9 as CCTV International?
- How did news makers at CCTV-9 negotiate control over news making in their day to day work? This question was dealt with in Chapters 8, 9 and 10. Chapter 8 outlines the editorial structure and system at CCTV-9, Chapter 9, the production system, and Chapter 10 focuses on the working of the reporters’ group. The intermediate questions each of the chapters addresses are as follows:

- How did the editorial system at CCTV-9 work?
- How did the production system at CCTV-9 work?
- What did journalists at CCTV-9 do?
- With the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International in May 2004, over time what evidence of change emerged? This question linked the argument for evidence of change (or lack thereof) associated with the relaunch and introduced in Chapter 7, then reinforced in Chapters 8 & 9 with the empirical evidence of change (or lack thereof) provided in Chapter 11, which surveyed content before and after the relaunch. By using content in this manner, I was able to provide an objective correlation of the more subjective forms of data that resulted from the core of the research and constituted the bulk of the data in Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10. The intermediate questions associated with this research question were as follows:
  - What was the content of CCTV-9 pre- and post-relaunch?
  - What did the survey of content over time indicate about the manner in which the May 2004 relaunch was operationalized?

## **OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

This dissertation has twelve chapters. Chapter 1 is this chapter. The remaining chapters are as follows, with chapters two through five constituting the literature review:

### **Chapter 2: China, globalization & hybridization**

This chapter discusses globalization and hybridization as two processes that frame and characterize the PRC's media development. I argue that only by conceptualizing globalization from a Chinese perspective is it possible to establish cultural grounds for understanding journalistic developments in the PRC.

### **Chapter 3: The development of television in the PRC**

A discussion of the history of television in the PRC shows how the struggles of the past are very much alive in the present. What is clear from the history of the development of television in the PRC is that none of the debates in the literature reviewed in this chapter have been resolved and that the market does not offer a solution where politics has failed.

### **Chapter 4: The journalist & journalism in the PRC**

The journalist and journalism in the PRC have their own history, which is both an embrace of certain values common with other forms of journalism and a specific response to the historical conjuncture of forces in which the journalistic field is embedded. In this chapter, I introduce the habitus of Chinese journalism and its commitment to social responsibility.

### **Chapter 5: Theorizing journalism in the PRC**

In order to understand journalism in the PRC, a theory that accounts for the historical and cultural specificity of Chinese journalism is required. Gramsci's account of hegemony is an important starting point. But Bourdieu, Certeau and Foucault provide the means for rethinking Gramsci's political intervention on sociological, cultural and quotidian grounds. Together, the four authors contribute to an understanding of a tactics of resistance that co-opts rather than confronts the power structure.

### **Chapter 6: Methodology**

In this chapter, I describe what I did in my data collection, analysis and write-up. I outline the role that participant observation played as the primary research method, and explain my use of interviews, documents and a survey of content as ancillary research

procedures. I look at limitations to the research and address the issue of working with human subjects.

### **Chapter 7: The relaunch**

The first data chapter analyzes the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International and shows how the relaunch was negotiated by the different institutions and agencies involved. In particular, I look at the failure of the channel to implement the blueprint for the relaunch in the manner in which it was outlined in plans for the relaunch.

### **Chapter 8: Editorial**

The second data chapter analyses the editorial structure at CCTV-9 and shows how news makers negotiate the hierarchy of editorial control that characterizes the journalistic field in which news making in the PRC is embedded. This chapter shows the limitations to the agency of news makers at CCTV-9, but also shows the limitations to external control of their work.

### **Chapter 9: Production**

This chapter looks at the production process and shows how the reliance at CCTV-9 on third party sources for the majority of the news both enables and constrains the agency of news makers.

### **Chapter 10: Reporters**

This chapter discusses the work of the CCTV-9 reporters as an engagement within the journalistic field with the full range of forces that enable and constrain its possibilities. Through analysis of a single story, HIV/AIDS, I show how journalists, as a mouthpiece of the Party and government, still find ways to speak truth to power.

## **Chapter 11: Content**

Content helps to inform data derived from participant observation, interviews and documents. In this chapter I illustrate what results from the production process and provide empirical evidence of the process of transformation associated with the May 2004 relaunch.

## **Chapter 12: Conclusion**

In my conclusion, I discuss the findings of the dissertation and relate them back to the theory and literature that framed the research questions. Based on my findings at CCTV-9, I offer a tentative theory of what is required if PRC news media are to develop not only as a mouthpiece for the Party and government, but also continue, in face of the encroaching market, the long tradition of socially responsible journalism associated with elements of Imperial and Republican Chinese media and media in the PRC.

As part of my discussion of the possibilities for further research, I explain why I have not problematized the unwieldy term Party/State in my work, and why I have not addressed bureaucratic inertia as a problem at CCTV-9. However, in both cases, I am concerned at the need for PRC media research in general to address both issues, even if at CCTV-9 they were not a particular problem.

## **Chapter 2: China, globalization & hybridization**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International took place in the context of the globalization of PRC media. As noted in the introduction, the relaunch was meant to mark a significant change in the channel's identity, as it not only became a rolling news channel, but also shifted from being a window on the PRC to a window that provided Chinese perspective on world events and issues as well.

In this chapter, I look at the concept of globalization, especially with relation to the manner in which China's development problematizes globalization theory. Against the expectations of the theory (or theories) I look at the intransigence of the state and the rise of the nation in the context of China's globalization, I deploy the concept of hybridization as both the condition and process of Chinese globalization, and I reconceptualize globalization from a Chinese perspective. This chapter provides the necessary contextual background for the discussion of the development of television and journalism in subsequent chapters, which frame the development of CCTV-9 and therefore constitute the habitus of the journalistic field in the PRC.

By situating the development of CCTV-9 within the broader frame of the PRC's globalization, I want to provide a context for seeing beyond the findings of this dissertation. As will become obvious as I move into the data chapters, CCTV-9 is still only in its infancy as a global broadcaster. But to write it off by contrasting it in the short term with the performance of its rivals would be to miss the quite different goals of media associated with the 'wai xuan' system from those media with which CCTV-9 competes.

## GLOBALIZATION THEORY

David Held and Anthony McGrew (2000) note that “[n]o single universally agreed definition of globalization exists” (p. 3). However, a range of positions cluster around a set of processes that permit a working definition, which is sufficiently clear to make globalization a viable concept for analytical purposes. Against internationalization or regionalization, which focus on the nation state or combinations of states (see Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 2000; Hirst & Thompson, 1996; Sinclair, 1996), what characterizes the globalization thesis is that its proponents take the ‘global’ as the unit of analysis (Appadurai, 1990; Castells, 2000b; Featherstone, 1990; Giddens, 1997; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Harvey, 2000; Held & McGrew, 2000; Robertson, 1990 et al.). They then tend to apply this unit of analysis to one or more of four fields of social life: politics, the economy, technology, and culture.

With respect to politics, Mike Featherstone (1990, p. 7, ) notes that, under globalization, development of nation-states increasingly takes place within a global political system that imagines the nation in terms of universal human norms, orders it according to universal standard time, while submitting it in varying degrees to the governance of supranational institutions and agencies. A global political system points to the reconfiguration and even dissolution of borders in the complex interactions and accommodations the state must increasingly make in its encounter with supra-national institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization and extra-national institutions such as transnational corporations (TNCs) (Castells, 2000b; Giddens, 1997).

Political globalization is closely associated with economic globalization. Immanuel Wallerstein (1990) bases the world system on the logic of ceaseless accumulation of capital, and identified its roots in the 16th century. But as Johann

Arnason (1990, p. 225, ) points out, in its early form this system remained centered on the nation state as a functional unit within the international division of labor. Notwithstanding the experience of isolated states such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Cuba, Edward Friedman (1999) suggests that the system becomes global only with the collapse of Soviet and East European socialism, and thus, according to many theorists of globalization, of any alternative to capitalism (at least for the foreseeable future). In a global economy, financial flows in particular increasingly challenge boundaries associated with the sovereignty of political power (Appadurai, 1990; Castells, 2000b; Giddens, 1997; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Sassen, 2001 et al.).

Symptomatic of economic globalization is the neo-liberal turn: the displacement of Keynesian interventionism and demise of the development state, and the revival of laissez-faire with the increasing expansion and autonomy of capital (Arrighi, 1994). The nation-state system, often traced back to the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, but never stable (Hopkins, 2002), begins its latest reconfiguration in 1989, resulting in the current situation of U.S. and G7 political and economic hegemony within the world system (Castells, 2000b; Giddens, 1997; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Held & McGrew, 2000; Lash & Urry, 1987 et al.).

The political economy of globalization drives and is driven by technologies from the steamship and railroad to satellites and the internet that increasingly collapse space and time in processes of 'time space compression' (Harvey, 2000) and 'time space distancing' (Giddens, 1997). Compression and distancing point to the erosion of constraints on global patterns of organization and interaction. Compression points more to the temporal dimension, emphasizing the intensification and acceleration of globalizing processes (Harvey, 2000). Distancing emphasizes the spatial dimension of



globalization, the increasingly “complex relations between local involvements ... and interaction across distance” (Giddens, 1997, p. 19, ).

Associated with compression and distanciation is a decrease in boundaries and increase of flows within the global system. Noting political, economic, and technological reconfiguration, Arjun Appadurai (1990) identifies an acceleration and expansion of flows across borders of people, finance, technology, symbols and ideologies. Under these conditions, the use of media to mobilize a national project comes increasingly under threat. Bracketing the U.S. experience, media systems have traditionally been harnessed to state building through enabling the construction of the nation as an imagined community (Anderson, 1983; Schlesinger, 1997). But as media systems commercialize under impact of the changing relationship between the state and capital, disjunctural and conjunctural flows increasingly reconfigure imagination in forms ranging from the local to the global, foregrounding the duality of homogenization and heterogenization in the cultural dimension.

Roland Robertson (1991) describes cultural reconfiguration under globalization as a “massive, twofold process involving the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism” (p. 73). Against the struggle for homogenization of world culture under the imperial sign of McDonalds (Barber, 1995; Friedman, 2000), Robertson et al. point to various forms of cultural adaptation, including ‘glocalization’ (localizing the global), ‘hybridization’ (cultural fusion, resulting in cultural novelty), ‘creolization’ (linguistic hybridization), etc. as a better representation of the negotiated character of cultural interpenetration (Friedman, 2000; Galison, 1996; Garcia Canclini, 2001; Robertson, 1995; Tomlinson, 1991 et al.).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Definitions of terms such as these are contested, as are the definitions of other terms such as syncretization and transculturation. However, what they share is opposition to homogenization.

Acknowledging interpenetration and the disjunctural logics of flow, many analysts, nevertheless, continue to draw attention to the conjunctural relationships between political economy and culture. Recalling the older arguments of cultural and media imperialism associated with the struggle against imperialism and colonization, they critique the normalization of consumerism as a lifestyle, and naturalization of capitalism as an economic formation in the era of globalization (Bagdikian, 1992; Boyd-Barrett, 1997; Schiller, 1991 et al.).

Globalization is characterized by complex interconnectedness that qualitatively changes relationships of sovereignty, in particular the sovereignty of the nation-state within the world system. Although globalization has systemic characteristics, it is characterized not only by a systematization that is functional to integration and homogeneity, but equally, if not more so, by a tendency to disintegration and heterogeneity (Castells, 2000a, 2000b; Friedman, 2000; Giddens, 1997; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 2000 et al.). In short, globalization points to the extension, intensification and acceleration of globally integrative and disintegrative processes that reconfigure not only nation states and regional actors, but also enable and constrain the actions of extra-territorial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, de-territorialized actors such as Trans-National Corporations (TNCs) and de-localized individuals, such as money market managers and media practitioners with TNC media forms such as Reuters, CNN International, BBC World Service, etc.

Finally, the periodization of globalization depends on the particular emphasis of the author. The term was first used in Western scholarship in the 1960s and early 1970s (Held & McGrew, 2000, p. 2). Wallerstein (1990), as noted, dates the processes to which it refers to the emergence of capitalism in Europe in the late 15th Century. Robertson (1990) recognizes several phases of globalization, but sees a qualitative shift to the world

as a whole with the global expansion, beginning in the 1880s, of the Westphalian state system. On the other hand, as Hopkins (2002) notes, a range of authors, who emphasize the decline if not demise of the nation-state under impact of globalization, tend to locate the starting point in events leading to and following from the fall of the Berlin Wall (Friedman, 2000; Fukuyama, 1992 et al.). Regardless, the literature invariably points to the latest phase of globalization as the culmination of a range of processes associated with modernity, the expansion of the capitalist world system and assimilation of the global political economy to its logics.

#### **THE PRC'S PROBLEMATIZATION OF GLOBALIZATION**

The U.S. and Euro-centric theory, or rather set of theories, summarized above provides at best only a partial account of China's globalization. Politically, what clearly characterizes the PRC's globalization is Beijing's conceptualization of the world system as one in which nation-states remain sovereign. This is clear from Beijing's insistence on the five principles of peaceful coexistence as the basis of its foreign policy. The principles are a) mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, b) mutual non-aggression, c) non-interference in each other's internal affairs, d) equality and mutual benefit, and e) peaceful coexistence (Peoples Daily, 2004).

Beijing ignores the five principles when it suits, having supported numerous national liberation movements globally, especially during the era of de-colonization. The PRC fought U.N. forces in Korea, lent material support to Hanoi in its struggle against the U.S-backed South in Vietnam, and to the Khmer Rouge (which also benefited from U.S. support), in the bloody civil turmoil and attendant genocide in Kampuchea (Kiernan, 2004). This mix of ideology and pragmatism continues today, evident in the PRC's

support of East Timor's struggle for independence from Indonesia (Kyodo, 2000a, 2000b).

Moreover, Beijing dismisses criticism of the PRC's human rights record, reiterating national sovereignty in this field, even as it levels criticism of human rights abuse by other countries such as the United States. Despite the rhetoric of non-interference, the Party operates from within an international relations paradigm that mixes ideology and *realpolitik*, not a globalization paradigm. Against the increasingly unconstrained 'flow' thesis at the core of much globalization theory, the processes of globalization are filtered through a pervasive political and ideological layer in their encounter with the PRC. Moreover, the sovereignty of politics within the PRC political and cultural economy and political penetration of the workplace through the Party-cell system mean that the filtering also extends into the economic, technological and cultural fields.

A range of authors (Chan & McIntyre, 2002; Curran & Park, 2000a; Ferguson, 1992; Kraidy, 2005; Ma, 2000; Sinclair, 1996) have commented on the premature death notice issued to the nation, state and nation state in the context of intensifying globalization. John Sinclair for example (1996) argues that the nation state "has to remain the definitive unit of analysis" (p. 56). The PRC's globalization bears out this claim. However, few authors have analyzed the specific challenge for globalization theory that China's globalization poses. Three who have are Friedman (1999; 1994c) John Hobson (2004) and Liu Kang (2004).

Friedman is concerned to recover for Asia a history of democratization, against the 'passive' and 'authoritarian' Asia theses that have justified imperialism and authoritarianism, including within Asia. Hobson (2004) argues that globalization is first of all an historical process that began in the East and in particular in China around 500

CE, and that what is usually understood as globalization is in fact only the latest phase in centuries of “oriental globalization” (Hobson, 2004, p. 2). Hobson (2004, pp. 2-3) argues that the East, especially China, enabled the rise of the West through the export of ideas, technologies, institutions and products, which then returned as the weapons of imperialism and colonization, during which time Asia functioned as a source of material resources for the West. In short, Hobson (2004) is suggesting that in order to analyze globalization, an Asian rather than a European starting point is required.

In contrast to Friedman’s and Hobson’s historical approaches, which call into question the definition of globalization and its periodization, Liu Kang (2004) embeds globalization in capitalist modernity and critiques neoliberal capitalist globalization in an attempt to recover for Mao Zedong’s revolutionary legacy the tenor of its idealism, without a return to the worst of its practices (the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution), in a bid to offer an alternative “so that the destructive and oppressive tendencies of global capitalism can be effectively curtailed” (Liu, 2004, p. 4).

Liu (1998) argues that globalization within modernity began for the PRC in 1978 when Deng Xiaoping moved to re-open the country to restricted engagement within the global system, primarily with the world market.<sup>20</sup> Other possible starting points include Deng Xiaoping’s Southern tour in 1992, since it not only marked the shift from experimentation with the market in special economic zones to the full blown adoption of the market and ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’, but also linked the PRC to the global implosion of communism which ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The PRC’s accession into the WTO in December 2001 is another key date for analyzing the relationship between the PRC and globalizing processes, since WTO entry

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<sup>20</sup> An earlier starting point would be the PRC’s entry into the United Nations in 1971, but the Cultural Revolution made this a formal rather than substantive opening.

marked the point at which the PRC further opened its economy, while agreeing to global trade rules set and arbitrated by the organization, i.e., giving up some political sovereignty in order to have greater access to the global economy.

Whichever starting point one takes, explosive and sustained economic growth has transformed the PRC in recent decades, transforming its relations with the outside world, and, more importantly for globalization theory, transforming much of the global political economy as well.

Manuel Castells (2000a; 2000b) analyzes the PRC's globalization not only as an internal phenomenon, but as a process increasingly linking the country into the global system through increased flows of capital, information, technology, media, and people in networks both within the PRC and increasingly with the outside world through global nodes such as Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong. However, Castells, like other theorists of globalization mentioned above, falls short in not recognizing the impact the PRC's exports have been having on the global political economy, Beijing's growing clout in regional and global political, diplomatic and military relations, and the country's growing demand for external resources and impact on global trade.

Although the full impact of the PRC's transformation is only beginning to be fully felt globally, the decision to open up the country in 1978 was what triggered the process, when one of the two nodes of the socialist system began to jettison central planning and state-ownership as the core of the socialist economy, long before the Soviet Union began to experiment with economic restructuring (*perestroika*). Against globalization as primarily an economic process, as Li (2001a), Castells (2000a, p.309) et al. point out, from the outset the reform process in the PRC was a political project, set in motion by the Party, and subject to Party control in a fashion that undermines the characterization of globalization as a process largely beyond the control of the state, which is how celebrants

of U.S.-centric and neoliberal globalization (Fukuyama, 1992; Huntington, 1993) tend to analyze the failure of perestroika in the USSR.

Emphasis on the economy at the expense of the state, which is seen as a “problem to be solved” (Kraidy, 2005, p. 157) highlights the neo-liberal and libertarian tenets of many proponents of globalization, who link economic liberalization and political freedom. However, as Stephen Manning (1994, p. 243), Friedman (1994a, p. 30), (Zhao, 1998) et al. point out, the ability of the Party to open the PRC’s economy to global market forces, including most recently through joining the WTO, without losing political control is evidence of the argument that there is no necessary connection between the market and democratization, in contrast to arguments that focus on the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the USSR as an indicator of this connection.

In the case of the PRC, the East European and Soviet experience galvanized the Party’s further resistance to democratization in the wake of Tiananmen. Political debate within the Party over reform throughout the 1980s and popular dissatisfaction which culminated in the June 1989 crackdown and killings was displaced internally with a renewed emphasis on economic development as a way of legitimizing continued Party rule, despite the failure of socialism to deliver on utopian promises (Liu, 1998, pp. 164-168; Zhao, 1998, pp. 1-9).

Given the apparent failure of socialism, a range of authors have pointed to the manner in which the legitimation crisis facing the CPC problematizes continued Party rule (Friedman, 1994c; Lee, 2001; Liu, 2004; Zhao, 1998 et al.). However Zhao’s (2008) work on the neo-liberal turn within the Party and its ability to date to harness economic development to bolster its legitimacy suggests an indeterminate outcome to the PRC’s embrace of the market and capitalism.

The Party's embrace of the market without political reform also problematizes assumptions about the role of information technologies in globalization. Globalization theory foregrounds the rise of the information economy as an instrument of greater openness (Castells, 2000a; Featherstone, 1990). An open information architecture predicated on rapid communications is considered a prerequisite for success in the global economy, which, some suggest, poses a problem for authoritarian political systems (Castells, 2000b, p. 66; Ferguson, 1992, pp. 78-79).

However, the PRC's success in developing its domestic and export markets, without the Party ceding political ground, undermines the argument that the technologies of globalization erase constraints on political oppression and information flows. The PRC has a relatively developed telecommunications infrastructure and nationwide state broadcasting system, exemplified by CCTV, and increasingly competition from provincial and municipal broadcasters. It also has a highly developed international broadcasting network in radio, television, and increasingly online in a variety of languages.<sup>21</sup> The government is rapidly deploying the internet. By the end of 2006, the PRC reported 137 million internet users, 10.5% of the population and, after the United States, the world's biggest user-group, although it remains a small and privileged sector of the PRC's population.<sup>22</sup>

The Party is attempting to balance information access in the interests of economic efficiency with restrictions on information that would undermine official ideology (Harrison, 2002; Lynch, 2000). As a result, political control of elements of the

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<sup>21</sup> The state-run China.org.cn "China's official gateway to news and information" is available in Chinese (simplified and traditional), Arabic, English, Esperanto, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian and Spanish. (see [www.china.org.cn](http://www.china.org.cn))

<sup>22</sup> Source: State Internet Network Information Centre (CNN-IC), homepage: [www.CNN-Ic.net.cn](http://www.CNN-Ic.net.cn)



telecommunications and media system such as internet content and national news media remains a priority (Lee, 2000f; Zhao, 1998).

Whether this balancing act can succeed is uncertain. Since Tiananmen in 1989, a relaxation control cycle has characterized the Party's approach to ideology, suggesting future developments cannot be predicted (Lynch, 2000; Ma, 2000; Zhao, 1998, 2001). Externally originating news flows associated with satellite broadcasting largely have been muzzled in China outside of big cities and for privileged citizens (although extra-legal satellite reception is widespread and may be on the rise).<sup>23</sup> However, even if the PRC's media borders become more porous, TNCs such as Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation tailor programming to meet political expectations in Beijing (Lee, 2000d, p. 303; Ma, 2000, p. 28; Zhao, 1998, p. 173). Shifting away from his 1993 claim in the wake of Tiananmen that satellite television was "an unambiguous threat to totalitarian regimes everywhere" (Pashupati, Sun, & McDowell, 2003), which angered Beijing to the detriment of News Corp.'s plans for expansion into the PRC, Murdoch now says "[t]he truth is that authoritarian countries can work" (Ding, 2001), especially where the country offers foreign investors lucrative opportunities in return for slavish support of the status quo (Lee, 2003b; Liu, 2004).

The neo-liberal turn within the Party, triggered by Deng's repeat in 1992 of an earlier statement: "let some people get rich first" ("rang yi bu fen ren xian fu qi lai" – usually and wrongly translated as "to get rich is glorious" (Fan, 2007)) and a conscious policy of fostering economic development in some areas as a way of seeding growth in others, has changed the ideological orientation of the Party. However, at core the political structure predicated on one-party rule remains intact (Wang, 2006a), which suggests that

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<sup>23</sup> Several interviewees stated how easy it was to access BBC, CNN, etc., via satellite.

economic globalization and technologization of the cultural economy may be changing the PRC in many ways, but not in the ways predicted by globalization theory.

#### **HYBRIDIZATION IN CHINA'S GLOBALIZATION**

Hybridization is both the condition and process of China's globalization. By condition, I mean, following Kraidy (2005), that hybridization, however understood, "is a prima facie global condition caused by voluntary and forced migration, wars, invasions, slavery, intermarriages, and trade" (p. 46); and that as Said (1994) notes in *Culture and Imperialism* "all cultures are involved in one another, none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic" (Said, 1994, p. xxix, cited in Kraidy, 2005, p. 59). By process, I mean that the condition of hybridization results in cultural mutation, the result, especially under conditions of imperialism and colonization and now globalization within modernity, of "various processes of accommodation, appropriation and resistance" (Kraidy, 2005, p. 60, referring to Said, 1994).

Under impact of Western encroachment throughout the nineteenth century, Chinese reformers and then revolutionaries appropriated Social Darwinism and turned it against its source, while it also served as a new way of thinking about China. As Chow (2001) notes, "European discourses of race, nation, and history were resisted and reconfigured as they were appropriated by the Chinese in the production of knowledge of China itself" (p. 48). Chow (2001) argues that armed with these new concepts of history, race and ethnicity, reformers and then revolutionaries took the earlier geo-cultural differences that had enabled the Dynasties to retain the name Zhongguo (Middle Kingdom) for their domain regardless of who was in power and recast them as racial and ethnic differences which both separated off Zhongguo from surrounding domains, and at

the same time localized the European concept of national sovereignty as the exclusive right of the dominant ethnic group within the claimed territory.

In this refashioning of the concept of Chinese, the reformers first separated the yellow races (Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Tibetans) off from the 'white' races, then separated the Chinese off from the other 'yellow' races. Finally, as the revolutionary movement gained traction, the concept of ethnic difference within the Chinese triumphed in the narration of identity. Through the recasting of imperial lineage in popular terms, the roots of the Han were traced back to their mythical source in the Emperor Huangdi, who was recast from being one dynastic leader among others in the Middle Kingdom to become the common ancestor of a massive lineage that glossed the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of the myriad peoples of the region in terms of a racialized concept of nation that could underpin popular defense of the state.

Narration of this lineage enabled the shift from imperial history, as the history of a succession of ruling families fated by Heaven to rise and fall, to popular sovereignty, which centered the Han as the agent of history and the rightful heir to the Middle Kingdom. Conceptualization of the Han as the dominant Chinese ethnic group called for the suppression of linguistic and cultural differences within the Chinese, while non-Chinese ethnicities were excluded in the process and marginalized. Now recast as an ethnic minority within the Chinese, the Manchu (of Imperial China's last dynasty, the Qing) for example, had lost any right to the throne even before Heaven withdrew its mandate in 1911 (Chow, 2001, p. 74).

In effect what took place in China between increasing contact with an expansionist Europe and the collapse of the dynastic tradition was an epistemic break in the Foucauldian sense, after which traditional China was conceived in terms that were introduced through the appropriation and reconfiguration of Social Darwinian concepts of

history, race, the state and nation that underpinned a discourse of identity and simultaneously a discourse of resistance to colonization and invasion. Through this process of hybridization, a new China emerged characterized by the discursive construction of the Chinese nation led by the Han as the subject of its own history in contrast to the discourse of the imperial tradition, which was characterized by an unbridgeable gap between ruled and rulers, who rose and fell according to the mandate of Heaven.

The result was the imagining of a nation that was both familiar and strange. As Chow notes: “It is highly questionable whether foreign concepts and discourse, much less epistemes could be transplanted in the soil of another culture without losing some of the cognitive functions in the host language” (Chow, 2001, p. 62). The result is “semantic hybridity” (Chow, 2001, p. 48), the “consequence is the creation of a new term with meanings that are not entirely foreign to the user of the guest language while carrying some shade of meanings from the host language” (Chow, 2001, p. 48). In their appropriation of the Social Darwinian discourses, the Chinese changed the meanings of the discourse, even as the country’s new rulers and their identity politics were changed by adopting and adapting the discourses to their own purposes.

#### **MEDIA, THE NATION & CULTURAL POLICY**

The process of hybridization has been underestimated in Chinese identity politics. Chow (2001) notes that most Chinese, regardless of political allegiance, “would agree that the largest ethnic group in China is the Hanzu [Han]” (Chow, 2001, p. 47), while scholars have consistently treated the Chinese as a group that is ethnically almost if not entirely homogeneous (Chow, 2001, p. 47). In the same way, the PRC’s globalization suggests globalization theory has under-estimated the degree to which global processes

can serve national ends. From a Chinese perspective globalization cannot be separated from (inter)nationalization, given that the nation has been developing out of the same dynamics of modernity, imbrication into the world system, that characterize China's and the PRC's globalization. The focus on the global as the unit of analysis has undermined a better understanding of the relationship between the national and the global in globalization. Nowhere is this more evident than in the use of media in the PRC. If globalization theory in addressing communication has largely focused on globalization's "hostility to the state" (Kraidy, 2005, p. 157) and increasing control of the airwaves by transnational corporations (Kraidy, 2005, pp. 97-103), this understanding ignores the logic of the PRC's insistence on attempting to balance commercial with political, ideological and educational goals. Core elements of this logic are evident in the role of the media, the rise of the nation, and the revival of Confucianism.

### **The role of the media**

Historically, the Party has always deployed mass media in service of a national project, understood as the fashioning of a nation in a world system of states. Beginning in the 1910s with pamphleteering and then with the press and radio, and then film into the 1970s, the Party put media to use as an institutional mouthpiece in the interests of securing its own position and building the nation-state (Zhao, 1998, pp. 14-16). Construction of a national television network began in the late 1970s (Yin, 2002, p. 28). Today, through the use of satellites, CCTV reaches most of the population, and the Chinese diaspora. Although the system is commercial, its programming is consistent with elements of the public service model, emphasizing news, information and education, as well as entertainment. However, in line with CCTV's status as a Party mouthpiece, the editorial function of CCTV is not autonomous of government control (Sun, 2001; Zhao,

1998, pp. 192-193). Therefore the system is hybrid, a commercially funded state broadcaster with a propaganda function that makes CCTV unique, although it has been cobbled together over the decades from elements of all of the major models (state-controlled, public service broadcaster and commercial).

The use of media for a national project recalls Benedict Anderson's (1983) argument concerning the imagined character of the modern political community governed by the state in the name of the nation. Anderson (1983) pointed to the rise of print capitalism in the emergence of and tenacity with which citizens imagined themselves members of a shared national political community and identified with the nation-state. As Sinclair et al. (1996, p. 25) point out, electronic mass media such as broadcast systems lend a multiplier effect to the kind of imagining of the modern nation that Anderson identified.

Modernization in China began well before traditional history came to an abrupt halt with the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911. Shocked at how easily Western forces had defeated imperial power in a series of encounters in the mid to late 19th century, reformers and revolutionaries alike embraced nationalism as a European-style project for fashioning a nation state, but oriented this fashioning against colonization and invasion (Su, 1994, p. 222; Zhang, 2001, p. 142).

### **The rise of the nation**

As Chow (2001) notes, when China's anti-feudal forces looked for the markers of a nation in China, they found little on which to base national unity. At the turn of the 20th century, few Chinese were literate<sup>24</sup> and China had no common language. Most of the

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<sup>24</sup> Fairbank (1986, p. 67) draws a distinction between functional literacy, which stood at 30-45% for males and 2-10% for women by the 1800s CE and the classical literacy that was unintelligible even to the functionally literate and set the thin ruling strata apart from ordinary people. The CPC claims 80% of the

country's 400 million people spoke mutually incomprehensible dialects (Chow, 2001, p. 51). With the adoption nationwide of Putonghua (lit. 'common tongue') in 1956 as the language of schooling, mutual understanding without translation or recourse to writing became possible for the mass of the people. However, even today, Putonghua remains at best a second language for some thirty-five percent of the population, whose native tongue is one of the dialects or a non-Chinese language. In 2006, the government said at least 40% of the population were still unable to speak Putonghua (China Daily, 2006a). However, as Kraidy (2005) notes, in the international system "most states speak for their nation as a unified cultural entity, even when national diversity is acknowledged" (p. 157). This has been the case for the PRC, with diversity marginalized even as it has been recognized.

After 1949, the Party focused nation building on building socialism through the use of the press, radio and film (Chu, 2002, p. 44; Sun, 2001, p. 52; Zhao, 1998, p. 4). Nationalism took a back seat to fraternal socialist solidarity in the international arena. However, following the break in 1960 with the Soviet Union, and then in the wake of the Cultural Revolution and the onset of economic reform beginning in 1978, although the Party retained control of cultural policy, socialist culture was undermined by adoption of the market (Yin, 2002, p. 33). In the turn away from the international cosmopolitanism of socialism to the market, cultural policy forestalled any return of the diversity of the Chinese peoples, except as ethnic minorities subject to the paternalism of the Han-dominated nation (Castells, 2000a, p. 312; Jenner, 2001).

Today, in the PRC's orientation to the outside world, national policy is emphasized. As a 'responsible' member of the world community and member of the UN

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population was illiterate in 1949, and that this figure had been reduced to 23.5% by 1985 (Mackerras & Yorke, 1991, p. 218).

Security Council, the Party has all but forgotten its roots in revolutionary and international socialism and the PRC's support and inspiration for national liberation movements worldwide during and after the anti-colonial movements of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Internally however, the rhetoric if not the practice of socialism remains an important pillar of the Party's legitimacy (Liu, 2004). Whether a double-sided project imagined in this manner remains feasible under impact of neo-liberal globalization in the long term is debatable.<sup>25</sup> James Lull (1991) provides the paradigmatic study of audiences in the PRC reading against the grain. Other authors point to the proliferation of meanings within both the PRC's official and unofficial cultures (Donald, Keane, & Hong, 2002; Jia, Lu, & Heisey, 2002; Lee, 2000b). Lull (1991) pointed to a populace disillusioned with socialism. Zhao (2008) contests this understanding, suggesting that the disillusion is with the Party for jettisoning its traditional support base, as much as it is for popular disillusion with socialism among sectors that have benefited from economic reform.

Balancing nationalist with socialist rhetoric is both functional to mobilizing a national project, and to defusing the legitimation crisis associated with the demise of socialism, even as internally at least the rhetoric of socialism is finding new life with exacerbation of social tension due to the spread of capitalism (Chen, 2002, p. 153; ChinaOnline News, 2001; Hu, 2002, p. 197; Zhao, 2008). At the same time, media's handling of national sentiment associated with events as different as NATO's 1999

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<sup>25</sup> And the historical dangers of bringing socialism and nationalism close together, which resulted in both Stalinism and Nazism is not lost on observers willing to make the connection: "... the one thing you rarely see discussed in just how right-wing China is. Not just right-wing for a communist country, with an injection of American investment here and there, but full of gut-instinct right-wingery; right-wingery of the sort that regards China's newly enormous disparity of wealth as perhaps natural, at worst a necessary evil; right-wingery that regards authoritarian, paternalistic control, particularly of the poor, as a duty of government; right-wingery of the sort that elsewhere has student radicals marching in the street crying fascist." (Spencer, 2004, cited in Zhao, 2008)



bombing of the PRC embassy in Belgrade and Beijing's choice as the site for the 2008 Olympics suggests a Party both in tune with and adroit at harnessing the popular mood to the national project (Chen, 2002; Hu, 2002). Clearly, today's proliferation of meanings within both official and popular culture do not threaten the Party's control of cultural policy, even as it loses control of culture. And ironically, the erosion of official culture through commercialization has been as a consequence of the Party's embrace of commercialization (Yin, 2002, p. 33).

### **The Confucian Revival**

Since 1978, the Party's increasing rejection of socialist egalitarianism and embrace of nationalism and has been increasingly linked to a hotly debated revival of Confucianism in the PRC (Chow, 2001; Jenner, 2001; Liu, 1998). Under the more pragmatic line taken by Deng Xiaoping and his successors, the Party has reconceived its relationship with Confucianism, rejected by the earlier leadership as anti-modern. Confucianism is now conceived of as a form of nationalism, and defended by critics of Mao as an alternative to political voluntarism (Liu, 1998, p. 172). However, as Elman (1998) notes, multiple 'Confucianisms' vie for hegemony within the debate. Moreover, as Chow (2001), Liu (1998), Elman (1998), and Jenner (2001) point out, Confucianism as nationalism remains mired in Western-style conceptualizations of race and identity, through the elevation of the Han identity as a shared ethnic and cultural marker that both authorizes an unbroken national lineage and obliterates the diversity of the Chinese peoples.

Critics of the revival of Confucianism in China and of the Party's use of Confucianism, point to Maoism, not only as a disaster for China's modernization, but also as an alternative both to the masked hegemony of capitalism in globalization theory,

and to a race-centered re-conceptualization of Chinese identity within the global nation-state system (Liu, 1998). These critics point to the irony of reviving Confucianism in terms of a race-based nationalism conceived of in the very manner that justified Western and Japanese imperialism, and colonization, from which the long Chinese revolution freed the Chinese people (Jenner, 2001; Liu, 1998). However, as these critics note, the Party is not uncomfortable with these contradictions, since they bolster both its own legitimacy by linking the Party to the cultural legacy of Confucianism, and strengthen the PRC's position as a nation-state within the global system (Jenner, 2001; Liu, 1998).

#### **RETHINKING GLOBALIZATION FROM A CHINESE PERSPECTIVE**

Under impact of globalization, Appadurai (1990) argues that the hyphen separating nation and state points to disjuncture putting nation and state “at each's throat” (p. 304). However, what characterizes the PRC's encounter with globalization is not the weakening of the nation-state. In the PRC, something else is happening. Since Deng initiated ‘reform and opening’ in 1978, the relative de-emphasis of socialism and the ability of the Party to refashion itself as the representative of the people in national and nationalist terms has reconfigured the national imaginary, allowing the country as a nation state to integrate more successfully into the global capitalist system.

Historically, globalization theory is a successor to Western-centric development and dependency theory (Chen, 2002). However, as Chen (2002) notes both development and dependency theory as a Western-centric project bypassed the socialist camp, including the PRC, bracketing for globalization theory the specificity of their development (Chen, 2002). With the shift away from socialism to nationalism and capitalism, China's modernization moves closer to the trajectory imagined for developmentalism, the more deeply the PRC becomes inter-connected into the global

system. Castells (2000a) suggests that if the Party manages the transition to a market economy, against the assumptions of neo-liberal globalization theory that Keynesian interventionism is not sustainable under capitalist globalization, the development state will be “alive and well for at least one-fifth of humankind” (p. 337). However, as analysts such as Zhao (Zhao, 2008) and Liu (2004) point out, neoliberalism with Chinese characteristics, not Keynesian interventionism, is driving the PRC’s rise, even if the rhetoric of developmentalism legitimizes its deployment.

Economist Fan Gang noted in 2005, due to the privatization of state assets the “private sector” already accounted for “70% of gross domestic product” (Engardio, 2005). However, as He Qinglian (2000a) notes, the principal form of reallocation of public resources “has been a process of privatization of juridically public assets by the power-holding stratum” (p. 70). As a result of the country’s historical development, the Party’s embrace of the market is not predicated on abandoning the ability to step into the economy in the manner assumed by neoliberalism and globalization theory. Rather, various forms of non-state ownership co-exist uneasily with state capitalism. Whether the Party/State can sustain this balancing act is unclear. But increasing it appears less in control of the political economy, so much as entering into a parasitic relationship with it while attempting to “ride the tiger” of economic expansion.

Friedman (1999) suggests that the theorization of globalization from the perspective of developed capitalist states reflects “the all-embracing binary of capitalism versus socialism in Europe and North America [which] serves mainly to legitimate neo-liberal hegemony where the free market is the solution and the state is the origin of all problems” (p. 259). (Western) globalization theory considers globalization a successor to (Western) modernization and part of a single historical trajectory. The PRC’s modernization, begun in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, intensified after 1978 when the

complementary discourse of the PRC's modern globalization began (Li, 2001a). At the same time, with the eclipse of Maoism, socialism was overshadowed and nation building, against the expectations of (Western) globalization theory, intensified with China's opening up to the world (Jenner, 2001).

However, as Liu (2004) and Zhao (Zhao, 2008) note, the legitimization crisis haunting the Party since the onset of the reform and opening has intensified given the historical legacy of the Party's legitimacy in revolution and revolutionary rhetoric. Whether the Party can successfully make the transition from coercion and repression to consensual domination (hegemony) as the country shifts from socialism to capitalism and a ruling ideology that draws as much on China's anti-imperial and anti-colonial historical nationalism as on its socialist and revolutionary past is debatable. However, the history of brutality – imperialism, colonization and two world wars – triggered by the West's and Japan's embrace of nationalism in the context of its capitalist modernization within globalization suggest potential pitfalls lie ahead for the PRC.

In this context, the call by President Hu Jintao for the development of a "harmonious society" should not be dismissed as Party jingoism, but an attempt, however compromised, to resolve the fundamental contradictions of the PRC's globalization, predicated as it is on the embrace of neoliberal capitalism, and characterized by a legitimization crisis, which "lies precisely in the incompetence of the state in reproducing social cohesion and a broad alliance of the general public in the face of widening social and economic polarization" (Liu, 2004, p. 12)

Finally, the struggle over terms in which to define the Party's quest for legitimacy highlights the danger of conceptualizing globalization in terms of mutually exclusive binaries (Friedman, 1994b, p. 6; 1999, pp. 254-259; Zhao, 1998, p. 9). In the case of China, these binaries include voluntarism versus pragmatism, socialism versus

capitalism, cosmopolitanism versus nationalism, revolution versus evolution, the masses versus the intellectuals, the countryside versus the city and increasingly the East (Confucianism) versus the West (Enlightenment). Binary thinking essentializes and reifies conceptual categories, displacing the dynamics of historical transformation to social formations conceived of in largely static terms, risking, in the final analysis, a 'clash of civilizations' mentality. Friedman (1999, pp. 258-259) points out that neither state nor market are exclusively European inventions, and that acknowledging the history of both in Asia would go a long way towards making globalization theory truly global.

#### **DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

In this chapter, I have argued that hybridization is both the condition and process of China's globalization, and I have analyzed three ways in which the PRC problematizes globalization theory. Firstly, the failure of globalization theory to account for the PRC's historical development suggests the theory's limited character as a snapshot of a particular conjuncture in European, U.S. and Japanese history presented as an image of international development. Even as the PRC embraces globalization and integrates more fully into the global political economy, identity politics is revived in ways that are both functional and dysfunctional to the country's further development. A relative de-centering of the core capitalist countries and a shift in the relationship between borders and flows, with a greater emphasis on borders, is required if globalization theory is to account for the PRC. A good starting point for a re-thinking of globalization would be to start with 1978 and see how the PRC's rise has changed the global political economy.

Secondly, the specific character of the PRC's globalization suggests a different and overlapping globalization to neo-liberal G7-centric globalization. This opens up the possibility of alternative globalizations of which the neo-liberal G7-centric version is

only one. Alternative globalizations is implied in Held & McGrew's (2000) acknowledgement that no single definition of globalization exists. The growing power of Asia's economies,<sup>26</sup> the slow revival of Eastern Europe and Russia, the growing power of the European Union and, culturally, the re-emergence of Islam and revival of Confucianism in the PRC, all point to globalization as a far more dynamic and fragmented process than Western-centric globalization theories suggest.

But from this perspective is globalization any longer any use as an analytical category? Globalization theory takes the global as the unit of analysis. However the case of the PRC suggests that the unit of analysis remains fragmented. Conversely, for analytical purposes alternative globalizations call for a different unit of analysis, suggesting more attention should be paid both to the regional and the nation-state as well as the global, within globalization. Globalization theory in its Western-centric form is not sustainable. More attention ought be paid to historically specific conjunctures of transformations in global politics, the economy, technology and culture, of which G7-centric globalization is only one.

Finally, the PRC problematizes the normative dimension of globalization. What 'should' happen under impact of globalization processes and what is happening, due in part to the unforeseen consequences of the theory's failure to account for the rise of the PRC, suggest globalization theory is at best a starting point for analyzing global developmental dynamics, but that new variables must be factored into analysis. Against

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<sup>26</sup> The emphasis in the theory on the G7 ignores the rise of Asia, outside of Japan, the G7's sole Asian member. In the early 1990s, the World Bank predicted that by the year 2020, five of the world's seven largest economies would be in Asia: Japan, China, India, Indonesia and Korea (Friedman, 1999, p.248). Granted, the 1997 Asian economic crisis slowed regional growth. But it strengthened China's position within the regional economy (Friedman, 1999, p.246). Moreover, globalization theory ignores a growing consensus within Asia that, from a long-term perspective, which conceptualizes change over periods unthinkable in terms of the dynamics of laissez-faire capitalism, the eras of European and U.S. hegemony within the world system have a limited shelf life (Friedman, 1999, p.249; Hopkins, 2002, pp.19-21).

the assumption that flows and processes of homogenization and heterogenization would undermine national boundaries and political borders, the PRC is embracing nationalism and rapidly expanding its powers within the global political economy. Beijing's rejection of criticism of its human rights record, popular pride in the country's history, the debate over the legacy of Confucius are all part of the reconfiguration of global political and cultural economy under impact of the rise of the PRC.

From a Chinese perspective globalization is a project that involves the transmission of ideas, technologies, institutions and products that enabled the rise of the West, leading centuries later to Western encroachment on China during the European imperial and colonial eras. China's modern globalization begins with its encounter with an expanding Europe and is characterized by the appropriation and reconfiguration of Social Darwinian ideas of history, race and the nation-state which result in an epistemic break that changes both the discourses of history, race, the nation and state, even as the Chinese are changed by their appropriation and reconfiguration of these discourses as part of their resistance to Western and Japanese encroachment and invasion. The imperial regime was de-centered and the state positioned as the embodiment of the people, making possible Chinese nationalism. Thus hybridization emerges as both the condition and process of China's globalization.

What characterizes the PRC's globalization is the intensification and expansion of economic development, strengthening of the nation, and reconfiguration of the state, as the Party relies less on coercion and more on consent to buttress its rule. Whether the Party has unleashed forces it cannot ultimately control, and how it will respond to that crisis, if it occurs, is unclear. What is clear with respect to the PRC is that globalization has not dissolved national boundaries and political borders so much as strengthened them as the opposition between socialism and capitalism gives way to a revived nationalism

and identity politics that, from a Chinese perspective, privileges the nation-state over the global as the unit of analysis within the international rather than global system.

Acknowledging this shift in perspective suggests the need for a re-conceptualization of globalization theory that can account for the impact the PRC's reform and opening has had on globalization processes, in contrast to defining the PRC's reform and opening as an effect of globalization, in other words a going out, as much as a coming in. Nowhere is this project of 'going out' more visible than in the political and economic spheres. But in the cultural sphere, the PRC has also impacted on the global scene, including through the development of television such as CCTV-9 and its sister Spanish and French Channel as instruments of state policy, and the continued importance of CCTV's global Mandarin language service for imagining the Chinese nation as a single people dispersed globally, regardless of their nationality. In the context of the PRC's globalization, the 'going out' project of which CCTV-9 is part is much more than a publicity or propaganda device. Rather it represents engagement with the world on terms that the PRC is determined to set. Moreover, it has its roots in the long history of the development of television in the PRC, to which I now turn.



## **Chapter 3: The Development of television in the PRC**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, I introduced the concept of globalization and its meaning in the context of the development of the PRC. The history of television in the PRC is part of that process, since television developed through the adoption and adaptation of imported technologies in the context of international ideological and political struggle. CCTV-9 is only the current manifestation of a long-term project to project globally the Party/State's image of the PRC. Only by understanding the history of television, can one begin to understand the particular form television journalism takes in the PRC. For historical reasons, electronic media and in particular television were as much constitutive of the field, as television itself evolved in the context of a conjuncture of forces both internal and external that shaped the possibilities of the medium.

In this chapter, I discuss the development of television and television news in the context of the two major institutions, the Party/State and the market, that have influenced their development. The first of these institutions has shaped the development of television from its inception in the late 1950s. The latter institution was re-introduced followed its eclipse in China after the communist victory in the civil war in 1949 in response to the twin failures of bureaucratism and voluntarism within the economy. The commercialization of television that began in the early 1980s was a state-driven strategy to free the state from financial responsibility for television. However, commercialization was not achieved through privatization of the sector, but through the introduction of the market into what was historically and remains a strategic sector within the political economy.

In this chapter, I introduce CCTV-9 in the context of the historical development of television. Although CCTV-9 was not subject to the discipline of the market at the time I did my research, the media system as a whole, including CCTV, increasingly is. As a result, CCTV-9 cannot be shielded from the market, even if it is protected by its status within the ‘wai xuan’ system. Even at the time of writing, the tension that resulted from this conjuncture of forces was putting enormous pressure on the news making system in which CCTV-9 was imbricated. The system was responding with a range of defensive and innovative tactics that are reshaping the field as much from below as institutional pressure is reshaping it from above. The relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International was a major innovation within these changes. But the blueprint from its reform was at best a starting point. Whatever hopes SARFT and management had for the channel were subject to the discipline of the field.

## **POLITICS IN COMMAND**

### **Broadcast television in the PRC**

Television was launched in the PRC in 1958. The service was extremely limited. Experimental broadcasting began on May 1 from a single channel, Beijing Television (BTV). BTV began regular broadcasting on September 2, 1958 (CCTV, 2006). The station was only available in the capital city and the audience was restricted to the few hundred television sets then available in the country (Yin, 2002, p. 28; Yu & Xu, 1997). Commentators (Huang, 2000; Yin, 2002, p. 28; Yu & Xu, 1997) note that television as a mass medium did not begin to develop in the PRC until 1978 when Deng Xiaoping launched the policy of domestic reform of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defense, and the opening up of the PRC to increased international engagement in terms of export markets and foreign investment. The reform and opening signaled a

switch away from Maoist political voluntarism to state-controlled economic determinism as the guiding principle of Party work (Saich, 2004, pp. 57-64). However, the earlier date of 1958 is instructive for the context within which television was launched, and the aims of the Party in developing the medium.

### **The early years (1958-1978)**

Originally, the CPC had planned to launch television in the PRC no earlier than 1959. However, learning that the Taiwan-based Guomintang (Nationalist Party) planned to launch its own national service in 1958, the CPC determined to beat the Guomintang to air, deciding that BTV must be on air before October 10, or National Day in Taiwan (Yu & Xu, 1997).<sup>27</sup> Behind this competition to be first was the uncertain relationship between the PRC and Taiwan, which continues in a somewhat altered form today. The PRC considers Taiwan a renegade province, even as Taiwan has democratized and developed a strong independence movement in opposition to the re-unification-minded Guomintang, which in 1991 abandoned its claim to governing the mainland. In the late 1950s, Taiwan occupied China's seat at the United Nations and had the full support of the United States. The PRC's closest ally was the Soviet Union, although that relationship was already souring even before Nikita Khrushchev pulled Soviet technical advisers out of the PRC in 1960 (Fairbank, 1986, pp. 310-312).

The launch of television in the PRC coincided with the Great Leap Forward, when in 1958 the CPC launched a nationwide campaign that broke with the Soviet model of development in a bid to catch up with and surpass the West. The campaign involved decentralization of power away from the Soviet-style central planning bureaucracies, and

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<sup>27</sup> The Taiwan launch date is not clear in Yu & Xu (1997). The original reads "... it was decided that the first Chinese television station would be set up in Beijing before 10 October 1958 to preempt Taiwan." Yu & Xu also cite Mei Yi, Director General of the Central Broadcasting Bureau: "... the news reached us that the Nationalist Party in Taiwan was set to launch its television broadcasting service in October 1958."

the mass mobilization of people at all levels in a drive to rapid industrialization (Saich, 2004, p. 39). The Great Leap Forward was an unmitigated disaster. The PRC's gross national product fell by some 35 percent between 1958 and 1962 (Saich, 2004, p. 41). The burden was especially heavy for the peasantry (Fairbank, 1986, pp. 281-283, 296-302; Saich, 2004, pp. 37-43). Disruption to the agricultural cycle because of collectivization led to famine. By 1962, hunger and malnutrition had killed as many as 30 million people, perhaps more, some five percent of the 650 million population (Becker, 1996).

For the engineers, journalists and administrators developing television in the capital city and isolated from the disaster unfolding in the countryside, these were heady days. The first television sets in the PRC had been imported from the USSR, and since 1953 Chinese technicians had been studying television technology in the Soviet Union, East Germany and Czechoslovakia (Yu & Xu, 1997). Given US support of Taiwan and the rapid cooling of relations between the PRC and USSR as Khrushchev moved towards détente with Washington, broadcasting in the PRC from the outset was never entirely a domestic affair, but also an instrument of 'soft power' in international politics. When the Soviet adviser to the broadcasting industry at the time told Mei Yi, Director General of the Central Broadcasting Bureau that the PRC lacked the basic expertise and equipment to launch ahead of Taiwan, Mei recalls: "We simply ignored his words and made up our minds to show Taiwan and the Soviet Union what we could do." (Yu & Xu, 1997)

When BTV began experimental programming on May 1, 1958, the lineup that day was a mix of propaganda, educational and cultural programming in line with guidelines provided by the Central Broadcasting Bureau (the following list is from Yu & Xu 1997, verbatim):

- 19:05 Model workers talked about the political significance of carrying on the ‘Great Leap Forward’ campaign.
- 19:15 A political documentary about ‘Going to the Countryside’.
- 19:25 Poem and dance, art performances.
- 19:50 Scientific and educational documentary supplied by the Soviet Union.

In the ‘can do’ spirit of the Great Leap Forward, other stations at the provincial and municipal level soon went to air. By 1960, sixteen provinces had set up television stations, although as Yu & Xu (1997) point out, a lack of broadcasting equipment, expertise and a lack of receivers – perhaps 12,000 in the whole country by 1960 – limited expansion of the medium.

Following the failure of the Great Leap Forward, the central leadership attempted to constrain Mao. In line with a prior agreement, he ceded the presidency to Liu Shaoqi (Saich, 2004, p. 41). Deng Xiaoping remained CPC General Secretary. Under Liu and Deng’s guidance, the Party shifted towards a more gradualist approach to economic development, reviving the bureaucracy, but balancing its power with the re-introduction of market incentives into the agricultural economy (Saich, 2004, p. 42). However, in 1966, Mao plunged the country into a second round of chaos when the faction he had since built up within the CPC was strong enough to launch the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) against what Mao considered the stultification of the spontaneous creativity of the masses as a result of the re-emphasis on centralized planning and the role of the bureaucracy in the industrial economy (Saich, 2004, pp. 45-46).

The GPCR was aimed at shaking up the bureaucracy, rekindling the revolutionary enthusiasm of the country’s youth and at destroying Liu Shaoqi, an ardent supporter of Mao during the 1940s, but estranged after the Great Leap Forward, when Liu supported Deng against Mao (Saich, 2004, p. 41). Compared to the earlier Great Leap Forward, the

GPCR was less destructive, wrecking the country's administrative structure and purging from public service perhaps a million intellectuals, many of whom did not survive the humiliations to which they were subjected (Fairbank, 1986, pp. 335-336).

However, in contrast to the Great Leap Forward, during the Cultural Revolution the development of television was curtailed. By January 1967 only Shanghai TV and Guangzhou TV were still on air, and then only sporadically. Although the Party formally ended the GPCR in April 1969 and Beijing TV resumed broadcasting that year, the Shanghai faction of the GPCR led by Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, remained in control of media, and used it to further their aims within the political struggle. However, they were unable to translate control of media into control of the government and the economy and were purged after the death of Mao in 1976. By 1978, Deng had emerged as paramount within the central leadership (Fairbank, 1986, p. 339; Yu & Xu, 1997).

Clearly television from the outset was seen as an instrument of power. Hybridization characterized its creation. The medium was developed by borrowing formats and genres from other media, and importing technology from the industrialized socialist countries. Content was a mix of imported programming and local news, information, educational materials and entertainment. Television from the outset also had an international scope, not only in programming, but in development of the medium as a showcase for the PRC's achievements.

### **Media as an instrument of power**

From its earliest days, communist governments have used the press and then broadcasting – radio and television – as instruments of power. The Russian communists founded and used various incarnations of the Party newspaper *Pravda* ('Truth') as an instrument of political agitation and mobilization, as well as centralization and unification

(Esarey, 2004, p. 1). The Leninist theory of the press ascribes a central role to media not only as a “collective propagandist and a collective agitator” but also as a “collective organizer” (Esarey, 2004, p. 5). As Esarey (2004, p. 5) notes, these two priorities are also key in the Chinese context, especially given the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Chinese peoples that the Party had to overcome to unify the country in the face of civil war and foreign intervention and invasion. Forging a nation from the diversity of the Chinese peoples was also part of the modernization project that had been underway since the mid-19th century in late Imperial China (Chow, 2001).

On the same day the CPC was founded on November 7, 1931, the Jiangxi-based government of the Party-controlled regions launched the Red China News Agency, predecessor to today’s *Xinhua*. Successive PRC leaders from Mao Zedong on have emphasized the subordinate and instrumental role of the press as a tool of the Party. A 2003 training book on journalism cites Liu Shaoqi, president from 1959-1968 on the role of the press:

How is the Party to lead the people? Besides relying upon the military and mass units, more often the Party relies upon the role of newspapers and wire services. At present, when the roads are blocked and the postal service performs poorly, the means of reaching the people are *Xinhua* news and radio stations. The central government relies on these tools to keep in contact with the people, to lead the people, and to lead the work of the Party and governments across China. (Esarey, 2004, p. 6)

Both the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution less than a decade later were attempts by Mao to bypass the burgeoning bureaucracy in the interests of direct mobilization of the people. Significantly in both movements, in line with Liu Shaoqi’s definition of the role of media in Party work, media were key, first in mobilization in the hands of the radicals (leftists) and then when each movement spun out of control, as agents of stabilization in the hands of the conservatives (rightists).

## Media policy in the early years of building the PRC

As Yu & Xu (1997) note, two approaches characterized media policy throughout the Mao era. The first was “Mao’s ‘thought-determining-action’ approach” associated with mass line politics. The second was the “state paternalism” of Liu and Deng. In Marxist terms, Mao’s approach recognized the possibility of the superstructure influencing the base, and the importance of ideology in determining action.<sup>28</sup> A *People’s Daily* editorial at the time summed up Mao’s approach:

Work is done by man and man’s action is governed by his thinking. A man without the correct political thinking is a man without a soul. If politics does not take command, there can be no direction. In every job we undertake, we must always insist that politics take command and let political and ideological work come before anything else. Only when we are both thorough and penetrating with our political and ideological work can we guarantee the accomplishment of our task. (People’s Daily, Nov. 11, 1960, cited in Yu & Xu, 1997)

Yu and Xu (1997) also provide a definition of state paternalism, which perfectly sums up its differences with Maoism:

[S]tate paternalism ... owed its origin to the former Soviet Union and its satellite eastern European socialist nations, [it] placed more emphasis on the role of the state apparatus in achieving national integration and in meeting modernization needs, although it did not lose sight of the need for political and ideological control. In other words, this approach underscored, to a greater or lesser extent, the importance of the obligation to edify the audience within the frame of reference of authority-defined values and tended to give priority to institutionalization, modernization and professionalization. Thus the role of broadcasting in developing and promoting national culture and education needed to be emphasized.

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<sup>28</sup> No evidence exists that Mao had read Gramsci (1971), especially as the publication history of the *Prison Notebooks* (see bibliographical note) almost certainly rules out that possibility. However, Mao’s theorization of the relationship between base and superstructure and the importance of ideology has an affinity with the role that Gramsci ascribed to what Althusser (1971) would later call ‘ideological state apparatuses’ in the maintenance of hegemony. For a discussion of the relationship between Gramsci’s work and Maoism, see Liu (Liu, 2004).



As Yu & Xu (1997) note “the struggle between the two approaches was a manifestation of intense intra-Party warfare.” Liu Shaoqi’s great crime was to oppose Mao. But it was less a clash of personalities than a clash over how best to operationalize leadership by the Party, whether through greater emphasis on the role of bureaucracy or through direct appeal to the people. Although during the years of civil war Liu had been a strong supporter of Mao (as had Deng and Zhou Enlai, who was indirectly targeted during the Cultural Revolution by the campaign to “criticize Lin Biao [Lin Biao] and criticize Confucius [Zhou]” (Fairbank, 1986, p. 335)), all of them disagreed fundamentally with Mao about how to carry forward victory in the civil war into construction of the PRC (Fairbank, 1986, p. 328). At stake were different attitudes to the roles of the Party, the State and the market in economic development. Once the Shanghai faction of the GPCR was purged from the leadership, the pragmatists within the Party, led by Chen Yun and Deng, re-established state-controlled economic construction as the guiding principle of development (Saich, 2004, pp. 57-59).

Chen’s and Deng’s approach was not classical socialist economism, but a hybrid economic form that mixed elements of socialist-style macroeconomic control in the form of five-year plans with various forms of management and ownership from de-collectivization of the peasantry, through to wholly state-owned strategic industries down to private ownership of small businesses (corner stores, barber shops, etc.) (Fairbank, 1986, pp. 342-360; Saich, 2004, p. 61). Deng and his allies cobbled the model together from Imperial and Republican China’s history, their knowledge of conditions in the socialist east and capitalist west and from the lessons of the Party’s successes and failures since 1949. Deng famously characterized this hybrid approach to economic reform as fumbling one’s way across a river by groping for stones (Liu, 2004, p. 52; Pan, 2000, p. 78). At the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Party Central Committee in December

1978, Deng launched the reform and opening, committing the CPC to building what he called “socialism with Chinese characteristics” (Jiang, 1997).

To sum up the development of television until 1978, the medium was seen as a state-controlled instrument of power, whose function was to promote the Party line and provide news, education and entertainment. However, it was also a deeply contested site, subject to shifting political winds and ideological struggle and therefore a site of potential disaffection. Both the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution impacted tremendously on television, although in the case of the former it was a paradoxically a time of growth, even as the country suffered, whereas the Cultural Revolution almost shut down television, making its subsequent revival all the more remarkable.

#### **ENTER THE MARKET**

Although many commentators tend to gloss the complexity of the PRC’s development since 1978, simply describing it as a form of nascent or proto-capitalism, a teleological fallacy is at play in this kind of reasoning, since an assumption is built into the argument that the PRC is developing towards capitalism understood as an end-point. The Party has never completely abandoned the rhetoric of social equality, even if the Party has changed its character radically since Mao’s death, and the economic pragmatists have developed a right-wing that has increasingly aligned itself in recent years with the PRC’s nascent entrepreneurial and capitalist classes, to the neglect of its core constituency, the rural and working populations, whose representatives Wang (2006a) suggests “have wholly disappeared” (p. 36) from the leading organs of the Party and State.

Economic priorities are constantly being adjusted, even as economic determinism has increasingly become indistinguishable from neo-liberalism. However, if the

administration of Zhu Rongji, premier from 1998-2003, was still consistent with the policy initiated in 1978 of economic growth at any cost, the administration of his successor, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, has been characterized by some recognition of the growing contradictions within the political, social and cultural economies of the PRC, as indigenous capitalism expands within the system and the system is further imbricated into the global capitalist economy. At the 4th Plenum of the 16th Congress in September 2004, President and CPC General Secretary Hu Jintao began addressing the negative aspects of his predecessors' economic determinism, calling for the Party to "build a harmonious society"<sup>29</sup> and pay more attention to the increasing income and wealth disparities uneven development of the market and private enterprise have triggered (Lam, 2005; Xinhua, 2004a).

Finally, capitalism is itself not a static end-point but constantly changing. Theorists of neo-liberal globalization usually cite 1989-1991 and the collapse of Soviet-style socialism as the key moment in the latest configuration of the global political economy. As I have already noted, less understood is the degree to which since 1978, the PRC's developmental trajectory has been as much a cause as a reaction to those later changes.

### **Commercialization and the development of a national television network (1978-1989)**

Regardless of the argument about the status of capitalism in the PRC, nobody denies that the market has changed the face of television in the PRC. Beijing TV was renamed China Central Television on May 1, 1978, marking the formal launch of state-controlled CCTV as the PRC's sole national broadcaster. The take-off point came some

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<sup>29</sup> Although the term is vague, Hu has noted that a harmonious society features "democracy, the rule of law, equity, justice, sincerity, amity, vitality, stability and order and harmonious co-existence between man and nature." (Xinhua, 2005a)

four years later, when the government created the administrative structure of the national television system and at the same time called on broadcasters to begin looking for alternatives to state subsidization (Zhao, 1998, p. 54).

Based on earlier success using radio to communicate and mobilize during the war against Japanese invasion and in the civil war with the Guomindang, and on the use of radio for mass mobilization during the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, the Party recognized the role television could play in administering its rule, choosing television as the primary vehicle of disseminating its views both to the people, and to Party cadres nationwide (Hao, 2000; Li, 2002; Yu & Xu, 1997; Zhao, 1998). Hao (2000) notes that the centralized political system required an “efficient national communication network to ensure the smooth implementation of central policies and directives” (p. 158), which provided the rationale for the development of broadcasting as the medium of political communication. Television (and radio) was identified as “the most effective connections between the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese government and the Chinese people” (Li, 1991, p. 341). The 11th National Radio and Television Conference in 1983 set the framework, calling television a ‘powerful’ and ‘modern tool’ for “encouraging the people of the nation to strive to create a socialist civilization that is both materially and culturally rich” (Li, 1991, p. 341).

The literature is unclear whether the Party was aware that the assumptions they were making about the power of television reflect those made by diffusion theorists such as Everett Rogers (1971) about the role of media in modernization. In a paradigm example of the diffusion of innovation, the number of television stations in the PRC began to proliferate, rising from 52 in 1983 to some two thousand in 2003, depending on

how one counts.<sup>30</sup> The number of television sets also began to increase rapidly, from some 12,000 nationwide in 1960 to 350 million in 2003 (Anon., 2003b). From a single channel serving some 200 television sets in 1958, by 2005 CCTV's stable of channels had grown to reach 1.2 billion people or 96% of the PRC's population (Anon., ; CCTV, 2006; Yu & Xu, 1997).

The primary reason for the explosive growth of television was commercialization of the medium with the introduction of advertising, and the revenue streams it promised television managers and hence the government. The first television advertisement in the PRC aired on Shanghai TV on January 28, 1979. Other channels including CCTV quickly followed suit (Li, 2002, p. 19). Since then, television advertising nationwide has grown from nothing to become a multi-billion dollar industry (Zhao, 1998). According to Guo Zhenxi, CCTV's advertising director, in 2004 the national broadcaster earned 8 billion yuan (986 million USD) in advertising revenue (Landreth, 2005). At the same time, as Li (2002, p. 19) notes, government subsidies have contracted to 0.5 percent of CCTV's revenue with advertising responsible for the bulk of the remainder. By 1998, tax on media revenue had already become the 4th biggest generator of revenue for the government (Akhavan-Majid, 2004, p. 558).

Although CCTV is the sole national broadcaster,<sup>31</sup> and the system has a hierarchical structure, with CCTV alone at the top, lower level broadcasters are extremely powerful, as Sun Wusan's (2006) ground-breaking work shows (see p. 18). The 1983

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<sup>30</sup> Figures that limit the number to about 300 correctly distinguish between stations that have production facilities, and content relay stations at the county level and below that after 2002 were banned from initiating content, including their own news, which had been encouraged in 1983. (Esarey, 2004, p. 12) However, the smaller figure under-emphasizes the sheer scale of the system (for an excellent discussion of the problem of counting the number of television stations in the PRC, see Liebman, 2005, pp. 18, note 47).

<sup>31</sup> Strictly speaking, the PRC has a second national network, China Education Television (CETV), a national distance learning network. However, CETV is not a broadcaster as it is not publicly available outside of the education system. (For more information, see Li, 2001b; US Dept of the Army, 1986-1998)

regulations called for the development of provincial and lower level broadcasters and stations, giving them a high degree of autonomy in programming, including for some time in news, outside of what was required to be carried from CCTV (Esarey, 2005, pp. 41-42). As of 2002, the PRC had 36 provincial-level broadcasters and almost 1,600 county and city level television stations (Esarey, 2005, p. 51). Because the PRC has opted for satellite distribution of broadcast television, provincial-level stations on satellite are available beyond provincial borders and in many cases nationwide.

Despite the power of provincial-level stations, the national network structure clearly privileges CCTV's position within the system. The administrative regulations for setting up television stations emphasize their "unified planning, rational layout, construction at different levels, and co-ordinated development" (Chang, Wan, & Qu, 2003, p. 29). The four-tiered administrative structure set up in 1983 – central, provincial, municipal and county – ensured that below the national level, all channels relay and provide space for major CCTV programs (Chang, Wan, & Qu, 2003, p. 29; Hao, 2000, p. 158). Moreover, regulations issued in 2002 forbade television stations at the county and below level from initiating their own programming, including news, or from competing with the national network, essentially turning them into relay stations for the national, provincial and municipal broadcasters, although lower level broadcasters continued to flout the regulations, indicating that the PRC television industry is much more than the regulations, which purport to govern it (Chang, Wan, & Qu, 2003, p. 24; Esarey, 2005, p. 52; Guo, 2003a, p. 8; Hao, 2000, p. 158).

In short, at least on paper a top down structure exists within television in the form of a pyramid with CCTV at the apex, although the pyramid metaphor provides a misleading image of CCTV's dominance within the system. Today, the national monopoly broadcaster faces strong and growing competition, especially from the

provincial and municipal stations, and in the major cities from local broadcasters (Esarey, 2005, p. 52; Jirik, 2003). Nevertheless, from the outset in 1983, clearly the Party intended television to be a highly centralized, state-controlled, commercially funded medium with a number of functions, principally news and information, education, culture and entertainment (CCTV, 2006). Among these, its role as a political instrument was paramount. The Party has not budged on that role for news media today, although the proliferation of commercial and entertainment oriented television and its popularity indicate that audiences have become increasingly oblivious to television as a developmental project even as the medium has diffused throughout most of the population.

### **Tiananmen and the WTO (1989-present)**

Throughout the 1980s, as media expanded under influence of the market, the leadership eventually turned to open debate of the need for media reform, including greater scrutiny of politics. Zhao (1998) calls the mid-1980s a time of “struggle for media democratization” (p. 35). She notes that under the leadership of CPC General Secretary Zhao Ziyang the question of media reform was put on the political agenda for the first time at the 13th National Party Congress in October 1987. The General Secretary’s report to the Congress dropped the term ‘Party mouthpiece,’ and called for “political transparency” (Zhao, 1998, p. 35). In a move reminiscent of the Maoist ‘mass line’, the CPC leader called for “supervision by public opinion” and noted that the Party and State should not only inform the people, but that the people should be involved in the discussion of major issues (Zhao, 1998, p. 36). Journalists, academics and political leaders were soon involved in an intense debate about the scope and depth of reform, which came to a shuddering halt with Tiananmen (Zhao, 1998, pp. 42-45).

In the run-up to the June 3-4 crackdown on the students and their supporters among the Party and citizens, many journalists including members of a number of CCTV's news departments had sided with the students in their confrontation with the conservative wing of the Party, which eventually prevailed over opposition, led by CPC General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, to the use of force (Nathan, Link, & Zhang (compiler), 2002; Simmie & Nixon, 1989).<sup>32</sup> Greater editorial freedom for media had been a key demand of the students and their supporters. In the wake of Tiananmen, media were savaged in the settling of accounts (Esarey, 2005, p. 50; Nathan, Link, & Zhang (compiler), 2002; Simmie & Nixon, 1989).

The media system did not begin recovering from Tiananmen until 1992, when Deng Xiaoping made his so-called 'southern tour' and called for an end to ideological debate and an expansion and acceleration of the market economy nationwide. Once the central leadership endorsed development of the 'socialist market economy', authorities gave non-news media considerable leeway to develop autonomously of Party control (Zhao, 1998, pp. 1-3). In line with these decisions, the Ministry of Culture ended the remaining government subsidies for many media, allowing them to diversify and retain much of their advertising revenue (de Burgh, 2000, p. 551).

This period is characterized by what Wang (2006a) calls the "consolidation of depoliticization" (p. 37) within the PRC. By "depoliticization" Wang means that the Party "is no longer an organization with specific political values, but a mechanism of power" (p. 32). As such, the Party has lost its ability to formulate anything other than

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<sup>32</sup> The best account of Tiananmen in English is *Black Hands of Beijing* (Black & Munro, 1993) since it shifts the focus of June 3-4 to the ordinary people of Beijing, since they, not the students bore the brunt of the army's assault. The documentary film 'Gates of Heavenly Peace' is commendable for showing the complexity of the student-led demonstrations, which barely stand up to scrutiny as a movement. For the role of the leadership, *The Tiananmen Papers* (Nathan, Link, & Zhang (compiler), 2002) is a good starting place, although it is a partial account, perhaps designed to frame future discourse about the role of different leaders in the crackdown.



policy instrumental to economic development, defined as GDP growth. The ensuing problems the Party has had with dealing with the contradictions of developing capitalism are a direct result of depoliticization, since the Party is no longer capable of critically analyzing capitalism given development of the market as the economic regulator and growing acceptance of private ownership of the means of production and therefore the fundamentally antagonistic relations of production necessary to this mode of production.<sup>33</sup>

According to the World Bank, despite a 6-fold increase in GDP from 1984 through 2004, and an increase in average income from 280 USD in 1985 to 1,290 USD in 2005, income inequality as measured by the Gini index<sup>34</sup> has risen from 0.28 in 1981 to 0.41 today (World Bank, 2006a). This contradiction and stark evidence of the tendency of the rich to get richer faster than the poor get rich, which critics of capitalism argue is a structural characteristic of this mode of production, is evident in the growing unrest nationwide in the PRC. Police reported 10,000 “mass incidents” in 1994, 58,000 in 2003, 74,000 in 2004, and 87,000 in 2005 (Lim, 2005; Macartney, 2006). In October 2005, police said 1,826 officers had been injured in the line of duty already that year, and twenty-three killed in the incidents, which ranged from face-offs to riots. Grievances of mainly the poor working and farming classes and the unemployed,<sup>35</sup> now thought to

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<sup>33</sup> At its annual sitting in March 2004, the PRC’s parliament, the National People’s Congress, approved an amendment to the 1982 PRC Constitution that reflected the CPC’s determination to develop capitalism. The wording “Citizen’s lawful private property is inviolable” indicates the CPC’s intention of developing a hybrid of market-based and capitalist economics within a Leninist political framework. Jiang Zemin’s theory of the “Three Represents,” was also written into the Constitution, providing the ideological justification for permitting businesspeople to join the Party (Ching, 2004; Parry, 2004).

<sup>34</sup> “Gini-coefficient of inequality: This is the most commonly used measure of inequality. The coefficient varies between 0, which reflects complete equality and 1, which indicates complete inequality (one person has all the income or consumption, all others have none)” (World Bank, 2006b). In 2004, the PRC’s Gini coefficient was 0.465 (Anon., 2005a). Zhao (2008) also discusses the relevance of GDP growth for measuring development and the current debate in the PRC over its suitability as a measure.

<sup>35</sup> The PRC’s unemployed are drawn from the ranks of laid-off state-sector workers, and ‘surplus’ rural labor, farmers who have lost their land to development or left the land either because it is no longer

number some 170 million, ranged from non-payment of wages through the confiscation of farmland for development projects to industrial poisoning of the eco-system by polluting factories. Socially conscious journalists strive to report these issues in mainstream PRC media, but as often as not are prevented by directives issued by SARFT, but originating from within the Central Publicity Department (Brady, 2006; Lim, 2005; Macartney, 2006; Pei, 2005; US State Dept., 2006; Xinhua, 2006; author's experience at CCTV 9).

The current direction of overall media development was set at the time of Deng's 'southern tour.' Reflecting concern over the involvement of media in Tiananmen, since then a partial re-centralization of media administration has been launched, although provincial and municipal level media have been strengthened with respect to the CCTV monopoly at the national level. In August 2000, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) called for a merger of terrestrial and cable television at all levels. In effect this meant in most cases a new television station emerged using the old name of the terrestrial station, while taking over the cable operations within the jurisdiction of the administrative section to which they answered (Redl & Simons, 2002, pp. 17-18). As a result, by 2003 powerful television groups had emerged at the national, provincial and municipal levels, which combined terrestrial, cable, and satellite assets.

At each level, these conglomerates had a monopoly over television networks and channels where they operated. The biggest of them was the single national level group, the China Media Group, which managed CCTV's assets. However, Beijing

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profitable to work it, or to seek more remunerative employment elsewhere, usually in the major cities on the eastern seaboard. The figure of 170 million is derived from adding the 20 million estimated by the World Bank to be out of work in the cities (2002 data) to the 150 million 'surplus' farmers. The Marxian category of 'lumpenproletariat,' which signifies "that in extreme conditions of crisis and social disintegration in a capitalist society large numbers of people may become separated from their class and come to form a 'free floating' mass..." (Bottomore, 1983, p. 292) comes close to describing the unemployed, especially the rural 'surplus', in the PRC today.

(municipality), Guangdong, Guizhou, Hunan, Hubei, Jiangsu, Liaoning, Shanghai (municipality), Shenzhen (special economic zone), Tianjin (municipality), and Zhejiang Television were all members of conglomerates by 2003, which were both cooperating and competing with CCTV (Esarey, 2005; Kender, Redl, & Simons, 2003, pp. 19-24; Redl & Simons, 2002, pp. 17-18). At the same time, their establishment has not been without problems, and their future is unclear. As Sun (2006) and Hu (2003) note, in 2003 SARFT stopped the process of building further conglomerates in order to digest the lessons to be learned from the existing conglomerates and to assess whether the restructuring of the industry had been a success.

The PRC's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2001 – to which in part the above-noted policy of building conglomerates was a response – and the top level change in leadership in October 2002/March 2003 – when Hu Jintao was elevated first as CPC General Secretary and then as President – and preparations for digital television have also had important effects. With Hu's ascendancy, Liu Yunshan replaced Ding Guangen as head of the Central Publicity Department. His deputy, Wang Taihua, like his predecessor Xu Guangchun, is simultaneously head of SARFT, ensuring tight Party control over the broadcasting regulator. WTO entry does not expose the PRC's state-controlled media assets to direct foreign competition, except to a very limited degree in selected sites such as three star and above hotels, and in Guangdong Province where in 2001 AOL-Time Warner and News Corporation were granted limited landing rights for Mandarin language channels, in a province predominantly switched on to the Cantonese programming that originates in neighboring Hong Kong.<sup>36</sup> The

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<sup>36</sup> To date, the plans of the transnationals to use Guangdong as a gateway into the PRC have not succeeded. By 2003, CETV had managed to capture only two percent of the market in the provincial capital, Guangzhou. In July of that year, AOL sold a 64% stake in the channel to Tom.com, owned by Hong Kong entrepreneur Li Ka-shing, in a bid to improve its access to the relationship-driven Chinese business system (Kan, 2003; Young, 2003). Rupert Murdoch of News Corp. is married to a Chinese, Wendi Deng. Perhaps

telecommunications sector has been partially opened to foreign investment (Lynch, 2000; Zhao, 2001).

Digitization promises to change the television landscape again. Experimentation at the provincial and municipal level in digital delivery began in late 2002. Nationwide, digital delivery is planned to overtake analog delivery by 2010. If all goes according to plan, CCTV plans to switch off its analog signal by 2015. Concurrent to the development of digital delivery, SARFT is planning for a massive increase in the number of channels, although analysts foresee a shortfall in domestic production, which could signal another opening for foreign investment into the media sector (Anon., 2003b, 2003c; 2002).

## **Summary**

So far, I have outlined the changes undergone by the PRC's television system with the move away from funding by state subsidies to advertising, begun in 1978 and fully realized in 1992, when most subsidies were ended. However, commercialization has not undermined political control of news media, despite calls in the mid to late 1980s from within the Party/State as well as from within media for journalism reform. The Tiananmen incident and resultant crackdown on media ended any hope of the Party changing its attitude to journalism in the foreseeable future.

From its birth in 1931 and its roots in the Leninist concept of a revolutionary party, the CPC has sought to develop media as a political instrument of domestic development with an international 'soft power' dimension in the case of television. Despite Tiananmen, what has changed is the class character of the CPC's membership,

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as a result cynics suggest that News Corp.'s 'guanxi' (relations) may be better than Time Warner's. But News Corp. has also not been able to expand its television presence in the PRC much beyond its original stake in Guangdong. An attempt to buy into provincial broadcaster Qinghai TV in 2005 fell afoul of the regulators, and analysts believe the central authorities may even be questioning the wisdom of the limited opening granted in 2001 (Dickie, 2005).

which now includes businesspeople, while its traditional base in the peasantry and working class has been eroded, although the Party remains committed as the guiding principle of its work to democratic centralism, which requires that the “individual is subordinate to the organization, the minority is subordinate to the central committee” (Saich, 2004, pp. 91, 81). Also changed is the range of entertainment-based alternatives to the formulaic television of the news system, which is hemorrhaging viewers, while development of provincial and municipal television is also providing strong competition to the monopoly national broadcaster CCTV.

#### **THE LAUNCH OF CCTV INTERNATIONAL**

The origins of CCTV International can be traced to programs like ‘Follow Me’, launched in the early 1980s to help English-language learning in the PRC. In 1986, CCTV launched a program called ‘English News’ (Liu, 2006). For its first nine years, the English news was a daily fifteen minute bulletin of items translated into English from the previous evening’s edition of the national news, *Xinwen Lianbo*, from CCTV-1 (Jirik, 2000). Beginning in 1995, management began to expand the English news team. By 1999, the English News had developed its own identity within CCTV’s Overseas Service Center (OSC), which would be the department responsible for CCTV-9 and CCTV-I once they were launched. The English News was responsible for three daily half hour bulletins on CCTV-4, produced by an editorial team with some thirty members. By that time, the English News was already under the leadership of Jiang Heping, who was appointed Director of the English News Department in 1998, after working as Deputy Director of the News Editorial Department at CCTV-1 (Jirik, 2000). On September 25, 2000, CCTV-9 was launched, transforming the English Department within CCTV-4,

which broadcast globally, but primarily in Mandarin, into its own 24-hour international channel.

In 2001, Xu Guangchun, who was then deputy head of the Central Publicity Department and head of SARFT launched the “going out” project as part of the Party/State’s aim to take the PRC’s voice to the world (Xu, 2002, cited in Liu, 2006). With respect to television, the goals of the project were within the first five years to land a full range of PRC television overseas, especially in North America and Western Europe. Then within a further ten years, the aim was for PRC to consolidate multi-language global and regionalized services (Liu, 2006). Xu outlined a series of strategies: both CCTV and high profile lower tier stations were encouraged to expand overseas and enter into cooperative agreements with overseas broadcasters; managers were called on to develop strong overseas marketing and distribution teams and agencies; channels were called on to improve their understanding of media laws, regulations and policies in target regions and countries; they were also asked to study the culture and audience tastes, the politics, history, economy, etc. of target countries and regions to “help with the government’s policy-making” (Xu, 2002, cited in Liu, 2006). In short, as Liu (2006) notes, the expansion of services such as CCTV International was aimed at increasing the PRC’s political influence through media.

A media manager involved in the “going out” project told me in 2003 that the aim for CCTV International was to be “China’s CNN, only cleverer.” My understanding of what was meant by this comment was that CCTV International would have the dual function of providing both a global news service, while remaining the voice of the Party and State in the international media sphere, obscuring any differences in the process. Whereas an objectivist news ontology would find this a contradiction in terms, from the viewpoint of the hybrid media form developing in the PRC, the task manifests itself as a

challenge for reporters to pay attention not only to a story, but to its meaning for the country's internal development and external image, and the danger in reporting facts that could embarrass the government.

According to CCTV management, the first time they heard the term 'China's CNN' was in a meeting with SARFT and the CPD in 2001, when Xu Guangchun used it to describe the role of CCTV-9 in the context of the "going out" project. The first step in realizing this goal had been the launch of CCTV-9. Previously, CCTV's English language programming had shared CCTV-4 with Mandarin-language programming, which was primarily aimed at the Chinese diaspora. In contrast, the 24-hour English service was aimed at the global English speaking audience, including inside the PRC and launched on a series of satellites that provided the channel with a footprint covering 98% of the planet, reaching over one hundred countries in the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania (Liu, 2006).

In October 2001, CCTV expanded CCTV-9 into cable delivery and began to partner with media giants such as AOL Time Warner (AOLTW) and News Corporation, giving them limited access to the PRC's television market in Guangdong Province in exchange for AOLTW cable delivery in the US cities of New York, Los Angeles and Houston and access to News Corp's BSkyB's satellite service in Europe. In the United States the potential audience when the service was launched was two million subscribers, and in Europe, six million (Hui, 2003). In September 2004, CCTV signed a deal with EchoStar to make its 'Great Wall TV Package' available to satellite subscribers of the DISH Network in the United States (Liu, 2006, p. 59).<sup>37</sup> The 'Great Wall' package

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<sup>37</sup> Subscriptions details for the "Great Wall TV Package" are available at [http://www.dishnetwork.com/content/whats\\_on\\_dish/international/Chinese/packages.aspx](http://www.dishnetwork.com/content/whats_on_dish/international/Chinese/packages.aspx).

features a selection of CCTV and provincial-level channels in Mandarin Chinese as well as CCTV International and CCTV E&F (Spanish and French).

The strategy of bundling CCTV-9 into a package makes determining its audience extremely difficult. Figures for the subscription package bear no necessary relationship to actual viewer numbers. When I asked CCTV management in 2005 how many people were watching CCTV-9 overseas, the reply was “no idea.” An advertising brochure used by CCTV International in 2005 gave the figure of “2.3 million subscribers outside China” (CCTV, 2005). Against this, CCTV’s website in May 2007 stated that CCTV-9 “programs can now be seen by 45 million subscribers outside China” (CCTV, 2007). However, these latter numbers appear to reflect potential rather than actual viewers. CCTV reported in early 2005 that subscriptions to the ‘Great Wall’ package had surpassed thirty thousand (CCTV, 2006), which, according to management was the break even point for commercial sustainability. However, apparent success in one market was matched by failure in another. On April 11, 2007, the *Houston Chronicle* reported that CCTV-9 would be “discontinued because of low viewership” (McDaniel, 2007). I confirmed this with Comcast, who had acquired Time Warner’s cable operation. Comcast would not release viewer figures, but told me that they were “very low” and not high enough to justify carriage of CCTV International on a commercial basis.

Given that CCTV argues that its global expansion is driven by commercial considerations (Collier, 2004), the possibility of failure must be vexing. On the one hand, should CCTV’s stable of international channels fail to cover costs, then the government would be in the potentially embarrassing situation of having to face questions whether its intentions were purely commercial in launching channels like CCTV International and platforms like the ‘Great Wall’ package. On the other hand, were CCTV to succeed in



generating subscription figures high enough to cover production and distribution costs, the Party/State would surely enjoy the irony of projecting ‘soft power’ for a profit.

Meanwhile, CCTV continues to aggressively market its stable of international channels, and is finding no shortage of willing partners, who hope to leverage association with CCTV into access to the PRC market. In Britain for example, News Corp’s Sky includes CCTV-9 among its package of news channels, which otherwise consist of Sky News, BBC NEWS 24, BBC Parliament, CNN, Community Channel, DD-News (Doordarshan), EuroNews and France 24 (see Illustration 1). Simply through association with the likes of BBC and CNN, CCTV-9’s mix of news and Party/State publicity is legitimized.

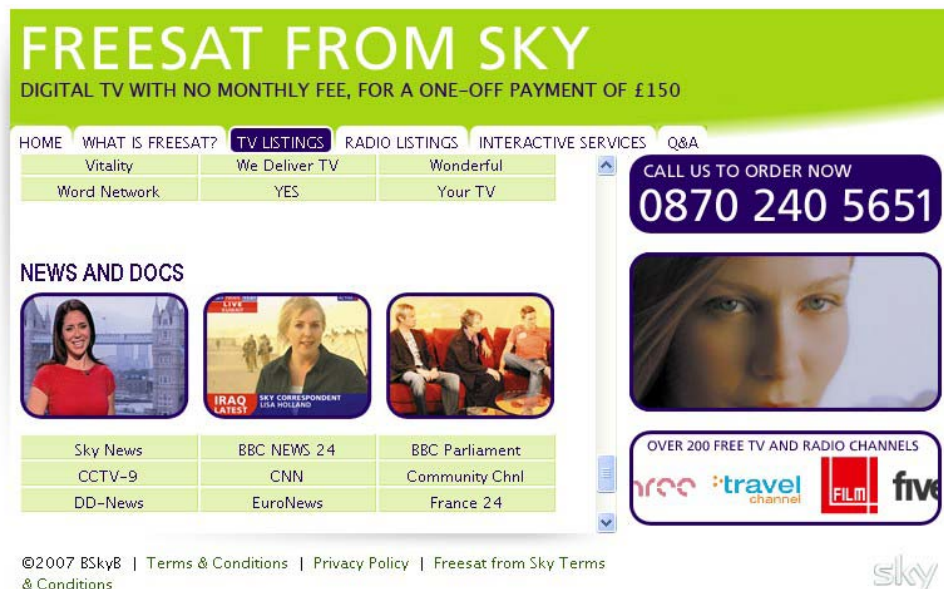


Illustration 1: Webgrab of BSKyB basic news package<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Source: URL <http://www.freesatfromsky.co.uk/?pID=3> Accessed October 31, 2007. Note also the presence of the French government-funded publicity channel, France 24.

Although, CCTV-9 had been broadcasting on a 24-hour cycle to an international audience since its launch on September 25, 2000, its relaunch in May 2004 as CCTV International was meant to mark a significant change of direction. The Controller at the time described the changes in the following manner:

From the former external publicity aim to “let the world understand China, let China go out to the world, open to the world a window for understanding China,” the channel has become an “antenna for the world, the eye of China, a window for the world.” The key is that the original single window has become two windows, not only is the channel a window for the world to understand China, but it’s also a window for the world to understand itself ... The existing news-oriented comprehensive channel has been transformed into an English-language news channel. The quantity of foreign news has been increased and this foreign news is being reported from China’s standpoint and with Chinese perspective. General news has become a rolling service. The respective features of specialized news are prominent. Economic, cultural and sporting news have all been strengthened. (Jiang & Liu, 2004, p. 54)

The key differences were the re-focusing of the channel away from being a “window on China” to also being a “window on the world,” the implementation of a rolling service for general news and the strengthening of the channel’s identity as a news channel, rather than a comprehensive channel. The refocusing was characterized by the channel’s slogan being changed from “your window on China” to “your window on China and the world.” The rolling service was implemented by increasing the number of hours of news and putting news at the top of the hour, every hour. The shift away from CCTV-9’s identity as a comprehensive channel similar to e.g. ABC, NBC, CBS or Fox in the United States towards ‘China’s CNN’ was achieved according to management by not only emphasizing news on the channel, but with new and revamped shows, a lineup more appropriate to a news channel, and a broadcast schedule that targeted audiences in Asia, Europe and the Americas, without forgetting its traditional service for foreigners living in the PRC (Jiang & Liu, 2004).

I noted above (see p. 9) the role CPC Politburo member in charge of publicity Li Changchun played in initiating the relaunch. Li's interest in the channel's development continued after his visit to Latin America. Beginning in 2003, he made a number of comments "on the question of improving television's external publicity work."<sup>39</sup> Li issued a written instruction to CCTV on September 16, 2003 making "extremely clear demands of CCTV-9"<sup>40</sup>:

我国的视角审视世界；以外国人感兴趣的问题为切入点（如经济，旅游）展示中国；以较高的时效报道全世界新闻，应成为 CCTV-9 改进的途径。<sup>41</sup>

[looking at the world from our perspective; taking what interests foreigners (e.g. the economy, travel) as a starting point for showing China; reporting the world's news in a timely fashion – these have to become the ways of improving CCTV-9 (author's translation)]

Less than a week later, on September 22nd, Xu Guangchun led a delegation of senior leaders to CCTV for a discussion on external publicity. He called for the "transformation" (改造) of CCTV-9, "to make CCTV-9 in a real sense an international news channel ("把CCTV-9 办成真正意义上的国际新闻频道"<sup>42</sup>).

On the back of these two demands, CCTV-9 management set about restructuring the channel, although from the outset what might have appeared like a clear demand from the perspective of the Politburo and SARFT created an ambiguous space and room for channel management to maneuver, given the simultaneous emphasis on Chinese (government) perspective, a focus on issues ranging from economic development to tourism and a call for a timely news service. Core to understanding CCTV-9's further development is to recognize that a starting point was given, but no more.

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<sup>39</sup> Source: unpublished CCTV document

<sup>40</sup> Source: unpublished CCTV document

<sup>41</sup> Source: unpublished CCTV document

<sup>42</sup> Source: unpublished CCTV document

## **DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

### **Discussion**

The transformation of CCTV-9 takes place within a general transformation of the field of journalism. But the long history of that general transformation indicates that the conjuncture of forces associated with media reform in general is neither singular, nor linear. From the outset, the Party/State has seen media as an instrument of power. At times the flow of power has been theorized in top down turns, at other times more of a circular motion is evident, in particular in Mao's 'mass line' theory and in Zhao Ziyang's later call for greater political transparency.

Although the Party/State clearly sees CCTV International as an instrument for projecting its voice in the global arena, the channel must also compete for influence with the likes of CNN International, which suggests a more ambitious project than pure propaganda. However, the moniker 'China's CNN' does rely on obscuring the separation of political economic and regulatory regimes within which its competitor global broadcasters operate. The obfuscation of CCTV-9's dual role is deliberate, and it is consistent with a regulatory system that cannot see television as anything other than an instrument of the Party and government. In short, the launch of CCTV International was less an initiative than an evolution in line with the development of television within the PRC. Consistent with the post-1978 development of television in the PRC as a hybrid service that functions as a cross between commercially-funded public service television and an instrument of state-controlled propaganda, CCTV-9's further development remains subject to the vicissitudes of political economic change.

The Party/State has called for CCTV International to become in a real sense an international news channel with a Chinese perspective. Against an objectivist news ontology, which would reject this possibility, the hybrid media model developing in the

PRC draws no necessary distinction between news and external publicity (soft power), especially as the Party/State sees news media in general, including in the West, as an instrument of power.

Nevertheless, domestically the legitimation crisis triggered by the Party/State's embrace of neo-liberal capitalism has impacted on media, especially news media given their instrumental status. The efficiency of the Party/State's external publicity depends in large part on media practitioners. But with the imbrication of media ever deeper into the market and the increasing contradictions the market is playing in the overall political economy, news makers are unwilling to play the role of Party/State lapdog without also playing the role of Party/State watchdog. They argue that their own legitimacy, and ipso facto that of the Party/State given their institutional relationship, calls for a broader definition of their current role.

What is clear from the long history of the development of television in the PRC is how close the practitioners of today are to their forebears. The launch of CCTV International plays out the same quest of international recognition that drove the original launch of television in 1958. Li Changchun's and SARFT's call for the reconstruction of CCTV-9 as a hybrid news, information and publicity channel echoes the same debate about the role of media in development and governance that have characterized television since its inception in the PRC.

Not surprisingly, given how high are the stakes, the inner-Party struggle for control of television in the PRC has been contentious from the outset. With the shift to commercialization of the medium the stakes were raised even higher. Not least among those demanding a voice in the further development of the medium are the practitioners themselves, including journalists, a conflicted species in the PRC, an instrument of power which demands to speak truth to power.

## Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the history of television in the PRC up to and including the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International. That history shows how close the past is to the present. Despite evident breaks in the development of television, in particular during the Cultural Revolution, the introduction of the market, Tiananmen and Deng Xiaoping's southern tour, continuity of the core function of television as an instrument of the authorities has never been in question. Only the organization of that function has been debated. The commercialization of television in the PRC was sponsored by the Party/State and the Party/State has been its prime beneficiary. With the launch of CCTV International, the Party/State is seeking to extend its voice further into the international arena. However, it cannot do so without the intellectual labor of program makers and in the case of television news, journalists.

The field of journalism is rife with contradictions as the different forces that shape television – political, economic, institutional and cultural – struggle for control of the space of its development. Within this space, journalism occupies a powerful niche. Historically, in the absence of electoral politics in communist systems, news media have functioned as something of a feedback mechanism for the power system. Unlike the market, which is mute but subject to the control of the dominant hegemony, the journalistic field has a voice, and it is to the development of that voice that I now turn.

## **Chapter 4: The journalist & journalism in the PRC**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapters, I have introduced CCTV International in the context of the PRC's globalization and the development of television. Central to both processes has been an official understanding that media are instruments of the power structure. However, although news makers may be instruments, they are also cultural workers – socialized subjects in terms of Bourdieu's (2005a) frame of reference that insists correctly on always locating journalists within the full range of forces that enable and constrain both their subjectivity and their practice (for more on this, see p. 354). Their habitus is not singular nor is the journalistic field uncontested. Journalists are embedded in a range of discourses and social practices that both enable and constrain their work and make their work meaningful, including to themselves. In the PRC, these discourses have a history that goes back to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the encounter with the West out of which China's globalization within modernity develops through processes of hybridization.

The progenitors of Chinese journalism are not that removed from today's practitioners. The turmoil, triumphs and setbacks associated with the ongoing modernization project inaugurated in the late Qing Dynasty, in which media played an important role, continue even as that project continues. Retired journalists today survived the Anti-Rightist Campaign. Some currently practising journalists were active during the Cultural Revolution. Journalism in the PRC is a successor to the intellectual vocation as it was practiced in late Imperial and then Republican China. As a result journalists may be conflicted people.

The roots of ambivalence in the journalistic vocation can be traced back to the ambivalence of the intellectual vocation embedded in the epistemological break that sundered Imperial from modern Chinese history, yet bridged the gulf between the ruler and ruled with the re-invention of tradition and consequent imagination and narration of the nation.

In this chapter I examine the history of the relationship of the Chinese journalist to political authority and I look at the origins of journalism in the modernization project, which continues to characterize development in the PRC. Finally, I discuss the contemporary theorization of journalism as a social practice that is both enabled and constrained by the relationship between the power structure and its instruments and by changes in that relationship due to economic development.

In terms of theory, the Party/State and the market are the major institutions that have shaped the field of journalism in which the news makers at CCTV-9 are embedded. As individuals, particular journalists bear the stamp of this historical development, which, coupled with culture, takes on the form of the diachronic dimension of habitus. The synchronic dimension is characterized by the complete conjuncture of institutional forces in which the field is embedded at any given time. Only by positioning the “socialized subjectivity” (Bourdieu, 2005b, p. 211) that constitutes journalistic agency within this deep historical trajectory are we able as researchers to begin to overcome a tendency within the literature to identify ‘real’ journalism as something that Chinese news makers know nothing about, since a journalism so constituted is not journalism at all, but propaganda. As a result, PRC journalists are constantly being told, and often telling themselves, they need to learn how to make news from people who remain alien to their habitus even if the field is familiar, when the long history of journalism in the PRC reveals a deep and complex structuration of the field that has become constitutive of



everyday practice that produces the best news possible under all the conditions that enable and constrain its making.

## **MEDIA AND POWER**

At a Party meeting in May 2005, according to *The New York Times*, CPC General Secretary Hu Jintao formally launched a ‘smokeless war’ against ‘liberal elements’<sup>43</sup> in society (Kahn, 2005). Media controls were tightened. From ensuing developments, it appears that progressives within the media were among the targets. In any case, since then, a number of high profile cases have been filed against journalists, and a number of them have been jailed.<sup>44</sup> Although CCTV-9 appeared to have avoided this war at the time of writing, journalists I spoke to in late 2004 were clearly concerned that something had changed in the political wind. After one editorial meeting, one reporter summed up his colleagues’ sense of frustration, saying “we’re being crushed.” When I questioned management about policy changes coming from the government regulator SARFT, one manager, also visibly agitated, told me angrily “I have no idea what is happening”.

As the ebb and flow of power within the PRC ceaselessly changes the configuration of the leadership at the center, Hu Jintao’s ‘smokeless war’ is a clear sign of his determination to shape political discourse. However, that Hu had to declare a smokeless war is also a clear sign that some journalists are beginning to find their voices again after Tiananmen and over a decade of economic development at any cost has

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<sup>43</sup> By liberal, Hu means small ‘l’ liberal and progressive (socially conscious, left-wing, neo-Marxian) critics of the Party/State’s authoritarianism. Liberals should not be confused with neo-liberals, part of the right-wing within the PRC. Neo-liberals hold to Friedmanite and Hayekian economic principles, and in so far as the Party/State has embraced these principles are comfortable with authoritarianism.

<sup>44</sup> The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CJP) notes that the PRC is the world’s leading jailer of journalists, with 31 behind bars, according to its annual report on the state of journalism worldwide, released on December 8, 2006. Although the number 31 is meaningless without analysis of the comparative proportion of media behind bars in different countries, Reporters Without Borders ranks the PRC 163rd out of 167 countries on its Global Press Freedom Index.

created contradictions in the political economy that progressive elements within the Party and media are concerned to address, with media playing a key role as the ideological mouthpieces of Hu's 'harmonious society'.

The role of news media as an active participant in the PRC's political economy is an extension of their instrumental character as organs of political and administrative power. However, the negative characterization of media as a mouthpiece ignores the dynamic nature of the relationship between Party/State and media. From its earliest days the Party and State-affiliated media were expected to function not only as a mouthpiece from the Party to the people, but likewise as a mouthpiece, speaking on behalf of the people to the Party. Mao authorized this dual function of media in his elaboration of mass line theory.

Even if Mao's intentions were cynical and oriented to inner-Party struggle, he authorized a discourse which has been utilized to argue that the Party should listen to and learn from ordinary people. Mao's critics characterize the mass line in top down terms (Zhao, 1998, p. 5). However, another member of the collective leadership at the time, Liu Shaoqi, called for media to act as a bridge between the Party and people in what Zhao (1998) calls a "bottom-up flow of communication" (p. 25). Clearly different leaders have used 'mass line' in different ways.

Decades after Mao, Premier Zhu Rongji described the roles of the media as "public supervision, people's mouthpiece, government's mirror, vanguard of reform" (Swartz, 2006, p. 73). In his report to the 16th Party Congress in 2002, CPC General Secretary Jiang Zemin called on the Party to "tighten organizational and democratic supervision and give play to the supervisory function of the media" (Jiang, 2002). In September 2004, the CPC released a document outlining its approach to governance.

Again the issue of media supervision was stressed, within an overall framework of Party control (Xinhua, 2004b).

Notwithstanding, the research literature to date (Brady, 2005a, 2006; Donald, Keane, & Hong, 2002; Esarey, 2004, 2006; Jia, Lu, & Heisey, 2002; Lee, 1994b, 2000f, 2003b; Sun, 2001; Zhao, 1998; Zhou (Zhao), 2000 et al.) is pretty well unanimous in identifying the failure of the Party/State to promote more than token supervision of its work by media, resulting in the mouthpiece role predominantly developing as a one-way and top-down medium, to which people have increasingly turned a deaf ear as their voices are ignored.

Although in the run-up to Tiananmen in 1989, media and associated policy reform were on the agenda, the de-politicization of Party work after 1992 and the commercialization of media worked to silence news media as a voice of the people. However, the continued failure of the Party/State to deal with the contradictions emerging in the political economy has emboldened some journalists, editors and journalism educators to begin speaking up once again.

Characteristic of this trend in media has been the work, alternately praised and condemned, of *Southern Weekend* ('Nanfang Zhoumo') and *Southern Metropolis News* ('Nanfang Dushi Bao'), a weekend paper and tabloid daily respectively, both published by the Southern Daily Group, which is controlled by the publicity department of the Guangzhou-based Guangdong Provincial Committee of the CPC. Amongst academics Jiao Guobiao, a former Beijing University journalism professor, stands out for his blunt and sarcastic attack in May 2004 on the Central Publicity Department, 'Declaration of the Campaign against The Central Propaganda Department' (Jiao, 2004) which ultimately cost him his job. Another prominent example occurred in early 2006, when the Central Publicity Department suspended the *Freezing Point* ('Bing Dian') supplement to *China*

*Youth Daily* ('Zhongguo Qingnian Bao') and sacked its editor Li Datong after he published an essay by historian Yuan Weishi, which criticized history textbooks for concealing what Yuan called the brutality and fanaticism of the anti-foreign Boxer Rebellion that swept Imperial China in the early twentieth century.

#### **CONFUCIANISM<sup>45</sup> AND THE ROLE OF THE JOURNALIST**

The contradictory function of the journalist as both an instrument and critic of political authority can be traced in Imperial Chinese history to the influence on Confucianism on education and political legitimation. In the post-Imperial struggle to overcome feudalism, the legacy of Confucianism as the social framework of everyday life was never abandoned even as its role in the legitimation of Imperial power was co-opted first by quasi-Republican values that were rendered meaningless under the Guomindang, and then into Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, and Deng Xiaoping Theory, under the CPC (Fairbank, 1986; Lee, 2004).

For an understanding of the weight of history that anchors the PRC in a past re-conceptualized to justify and simultaneously gloss the break with Imperial China, the role of Confucianism must be taken into consideration. The chief instrument that defined intellectual work as above all political work was the imperial examination. Following the Warring States era (403-221 BCE), the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) elevated the teachings of Confucius to canonical status (Fairbank, 1986, pp. 27-28). As Simon Leys

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<sup>45</sup> By Confucianism, I do not mean the practice of venerating Confucius, which is increasingly becoming the state religion in the PRC. Rather, I mean the ensemble of justifications, motives and practices that have evolved over the centuries in the name of Confucius. This ensemble is as confusing, contradictory and meaningless if parsed for logic and consistency as is the ensemble of practices associated with terms such as Christianity or Islam. Without falling into the trap of essentialism associated with the likes of Samuel Huntington (1993) and the promotion of civilizational exceptionalism, what I mean by Confucianism is meaningful for understanding the history, politics and practice of identity in the PRC, just as Christianity and its formalization in the church was central to the development of the politics and practice of identity in the West, and Islam for the politics and practice of identity in the Arab world.

(1997) notes, the itinerant scholar taught that “government and administration of the state should be exclusively entrusted to a moral and intellectual elite of “gentlemen”” (p. xxviii) thereby establishing “an enduring and decisive link between education and political power: only the former could provide access to the latter” (p. xxviii).<sup>46</sup> However, by the time the teachings of Confucius were institutionalized they were also well on their way to becoming much more and much less than the pithy statements and arguments of the original *Analects*.

They had become much more, because as Leys (1997, p. xv) argues, in the following two thousand years Confucianism would become an imperial cult. Even after the end of empire and during the Anti-Rightist Campaign and Cultural Revolution of the PRC, intellectuals were persecuted less for being intellectuals not averse to a strong and centralized state than for disagreeing with Mao about how best to serve that state (Fairbank, 1986, p. 338). As Leys (1997, p. xxix) observes: “The Maoist concept of ‘re-education’ that was to generate such dreadful excesses at the time of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ was in fact one of the many unconscious resurgences of the Confucian mentality, which paradoxically permeated the psychological substructure of Maoism” (p. xxix). Just as in earlier times, the intellectual was central to the justification and maintenance of the political economic system (Fairbank, 1986, p. 338), and just as fated to its whims.

Liu Shaoqi died in 1969 at the height of the Cultural Revolution, hounded out of power and into an early grave by Mao. Following Mao’s departure, as part of a move by the more cautious and somewhat chastened leadership, given the failure of the Great Leap

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<sup>46</sup> Walter Lippman had something similar in mind in his arguments with John Dewey about the role of the journalist. As history teaches us, Lippman won out and the today’s top-down news systems run by a coterie of professionals was the result. Against this model, Dewey argued for journalism as a dialogical practice, a mode Habermas would later take up and make central to his theory of communicative action, and Merritt would attempt to codify in civic and public journalism (Bybee, 1997; Habermas, 1984; Merritt, 1998).

Forward and chaos of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping posthumously rehabilitated Liu in 1981. Liu was one of several hundred thousand ‘rightists’ whose records were cleared, although many of them were already dead and many of them had been victims of Deng himself when as CPC General Secretary in 1957, he supported Mao’s purge of intellectuals in the ‘Anti-Rightist Campaign,’ a backlash against the ‘Hundred Flowers Movement’ (Fairbank, 1986, pp. 295, 344).

The Hundred Flowers Movement, launched in 1957, was an attempt to involve intellectuals<sup>47</sup> in building the revolution, still defined in Soviet terms as modernization and industrialization. However, when the Party called for their input with the slogan “let a hundred flowers bloom together, let the hundred schools of thought contend,” (Fairbank, 1986, p. 292) intellectuals attacked the Party for obstructing rather than facilitating their work. The movement quickly turned against so many of the Party’s practices that Mao, with Deng’s support, initiated a struggle against intellectuals, the Anti-Rightist Campaign, targeting between 400,000 and 700,000 of the very people the Party needed to modernize the country. They were investigated, demoted, fired or imprisoned (Fairbank, 1986, p. 293; Saich, 2004, p. 39).

These two campaigns highlight the problem facing intellectuals in the PRC, a common problem in communist countries, given the uncertain status of the intellectual within Marxist theory, which prior to Gramsci never developed a consistent answer to the question whether intellectuals were part of the productive classes or non-productive strata. Mao was ambivalent about the role of the intellectuals in revolution. On the one hand, he stated “[w]e can’t get along without them” (Fairbank, 1986, p. 291). On the other hand, he turned on them whenever their own thinking deviated from the Party line.

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<sup>47</sup> At the time, intellectual was defined as having high-school or above education. Intellectuals numbered five million out of a population of 400 million (1.25%). Of those, about 185,000 had a college-level education (0.05% of the population). (Fairbank, 1986, pp. 291-293)

The original statements and arguments of the *Analects* had become much less because the institutionalization of Confucianism as a set of rules for governing the empire over the millennia had largely evacuated Confucius from the texts. The rote learning of the classics by the administrative class did not protect them from the pressures of the myriad familial, collegial and professional relationships that brought success in the imperial examination. The examination system may have been egalitarian in principle, but as the Qing Dynasty began to crumble, it had become elitist and corrupt in practice (Fairbank, 1986, p. 31).

Nevertheless, against the cult of Confucianism, the *Analects* of Confucius remain intact. Against their institutionalization as precepts for imperial governance, Elias Canetti suggests that “[t]he Analects of Confucius are the oldest complete intellectual and spiritual portrait of a man. It strikes one as a modern book” (cited in Leys, 1997, p. xxi). In this sense, Leys’ translation of the *Analects* can be read as a call to put Confucius back into Confucianism. In justifying the translation, Leys (1997) wrote:

Karl Marx once warned overenthusiastic followers that he was not a Marxist. With better reason, one should say that Confucius was certainly not a Confucianist. Imperial Confucianism only extolled those statements from the Master that prescribed submission to the established authorities, whereas more essential notions were conveniently ignored – such as the precepts of social justice, political dissent, and the moral duty for intellectuals to criticize the ruler (even at the risk of their lives) when he was abusing his power, or when he oppressed the people. (p. xvi)

Here we have quite a different picture of Confucius and departure point for an understanding of the role of the intellectual as it has evolved among journalists in the PRC. Combining this shift with an understanding of the manner in which the intellectual vocation in China and later the PRC was always-already political work, one can see the cultural roots of the career intellectual’s commitment simultaneously to the established

order and to social justice. These cultural roots are the source of the deep and ambivalent tensions that characterize the intellectual vocation and journalism as a profession in the PRC, once social justice was de-linked from service to the imperial family and linked to serving the newly invented nation.

#### **SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER**

Analysts (de Burgh, 2003a; Lee, 2004; Swartz, 2006; Zhao, 1998) trace the history of the Chinese journalist back to agitation for political-economic, technological and cultural ‘modernization’ in the decades preceding the collapse of Imperial China’s Qing Dynasty in 1911 and foundation of the Republic of China in 1912. From the outset, reformers theorized modernization as a critical engagement with Confucianism, and embrace of ‘westernization,’ which peaked with the Reform Movement of the 1890s and the May 4th Movement (1915-1925). De Burgh (2000) notes the conflicted character of this movement:

... although many of the reformer-journalists of the early years of the century sought to reject Confucianism as social ideology, they remained wedded to the Confucian idea of the function of the literati and arrogated to themselves the right to teach, exhort and berate their fellow Chinese (p. 556).

Several writers (de Burgh, 2003a; Lee, 2000a; Swartz, 2006) point out that westernization as such was never the aim of the reform movement. Rather, westernization offered a set of conceptual and cognitive tools which reformers and subsequently revolutionaries used to dismantle and rebuild the political, economic, technological and cultural spaces of China’s emerging modernity in the context of collapse, conflict, civil war between warlords, nationalists and communists, anti-imperialist war against the Japanese, and the expulsion or withdrawal of European colonial forces from concessions in several major cities. This period lasted from the waning years of the Qing Dynasty



(1644-1911), and bloody aftermath of its collapse in 1911 to the retreat of the Nationalists (Guomindang) to Taiwan in 1949, and subsequent proclamation of the People's Republic of China on the mainland on October 1 that year.

For the Chinese press this was an era of immense ferment, experimentation, and growth. Despite, or perhaps even in response to decades of unrest and violence, media flourished. According to de Burgh (2003a, p. 198), by 1911 Imperial China had over 500 newspapers and possibly thousands of magazines. As the country descended into chaos, the number grew. By 1935, despite turmoil across much of the country with foreign forces in control of concessions in key cities, communists fighting nationalists and both fighting the Japanese invasion, 910 newspapers served the reading public (de Burgh, 2003a, p. 203). That number had risen to 1,781 by 1947, although the Guomindang had moved increasingly throughout the 1930s to censor the press and the Communists would soon do the same (de Burgh, 2003a; Fairbank, 1986, p. 221). As de Burgh notes, not until the mid-1990s did the PRC enjoy the scope and variety in the press that had characterized early post-imperial China.

The first modern Chinese journalists practiced their craft in the treaty ports and Imperial capital. De Burgh (2003a) lists five preconditions of their emergence:

An intellectual movement aimed at subjecting Confucian orthodoxy to rational scrutiny began to undermine complacency about the Chinese world as the epitome of civilisation; large numbers of Chinese went abroad to live in countries outside that world and a trickle returned wealthy and knowledgeable about lands which it was increasingly difficult to accept were barbarian, as tradition would have it; European military strength shook Chinese confidence; the need to counter the overwhelming power of the Europeans gave rise to a reform movement of intellectuals who rapidly moved from criticizing military shortcomings to identifying political and social weaknesses; European missionaries, forcing their way into China behind the traders and soldiers, learned Chinese and began to publish. (p. 196)

The first modern Chinese daily was *Chong Ngoi Sam Bo*, launched in 1854. The first mass circulation daily was *Wahji Yatbo*, published in 1864. The early papers had the character of a ‘yellow press,’ mixing business reporting functional to trade with gossip from the capital. Journalists at first had little standing in the community, and were even referred to as “scum” (de Burgh, 2003a, p. 197). However that began to change when the reform movement began to use the press to circulate its ideas (de Burgh, 2003a, pp. 196-197).

The reform movement grew up around literati who were part of the intellectual milieu seeking work in the Imperial bureaucracy. But with new avenues for employment opening up as the modernization movement developed, candidates who failed to make headway in the imperial examination were among those who organized themselves into ‘self-strengthening’ study and discussion groups beginning in the 1860s. As de Burgh (2003a) notes, when Kang Youwei, one of the leading reformers, lent his considerable prestige to the nascent press by using it as a vehicle for his ideas, the image of journalism began to change. Among his protégés was Liang Qichao who would go on to become one of the founding practitioners and editors of modern Chinese journalism (de Burgh, 2003a, p. 197; Fairbank, 1986, p. 134).

From its inception Chinese journalism was a patriotic profession. From the outset the Chinese journalist, whether a reformist or revolutionary, was committed (de Burgh, 2003a, p. 197). Would-be bureaucrats increasingly turned to letters. Their training had been in thinking and writing. They were the natural progenitors of an indigenous journalistic tradition. Rooted in the affinity of the intellectuals with political authority through their association with the Imperial bureaucracy, this tradition was one of keen engagement in the affairs of the day. It was characterized by a strong commitment to defending the empire, and later the state against foreign incursion and occupation, even if

the techniques of that defense were largely borrowed from the very people, of whom these early journalists were determined to rid the country (de Burgh, 2003a).

At the time, following the Empress Dowager's coup d'état in 1898 against the reformist Emperor Guangxu, many prominent reformers, including Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, had taken refuge in Japan. In Tokyo, Liang launched a new paper, *Current Affairs*, which became a paradigm for the emerging Chinese press. In an editorial, Liang laid out its role (Britton, 1933):

To report in detail the new government measures in the several provinces, so that readers may know that modern innovations actually do yield benefits; and also to realise the difficulties of those in authority, and their aims.... To delve into and fully expose details of important Sino-foreign problems, so that readers may understand that China is not established internationally, that because of internal disorganisation China is humiliated by other nations, and that because of our ignorance of international law we are duped by other nations; and thus to stimulate the new learning, and cause readers to give thought to purging the nation of its humiliations. (p. 89, cited in de Burgh, 2003, p.197)

The refugee and émigré Chinese community in Japan was full of students and journalism was the ideal career. Their journalism was patriotic and change oriented. Their goal was salvation of the nation (Britton, 1933, cited in de Burgh, 2003, p.197). As intellectuals, they devoured the learning available from Europe and the United States, including the works of the social Darwinists, classical political economists and Marx (Chow, 2001; Fairbank, 1986; Lee, 2004; Zhao, 1998). From these and similar works, read and adapted to local conditions in a form of hybridization that changed the works as much as they were to change Imperial and Republican China and later the PRC, China's first generation of journalists were among those thinkers, who forged the ideological weapons that were to first defend the empire, and then justify its overthrow.

An epistemological break occurred at this point in Chinese history when Kang Youwei read social Darwinian ideas into the Confucian classics and discovered a

Confucian evolutionism (Chow, 2001; Fairbank, 1986, pp. 132-133). The concept of history as a relationship between past, present and future became possible as Chinese reformers and revolutionaries embraced the concepts of change, progress, race, nation and survival of the fittest. This form of history replaced the endless cycles of Imperial China, where the passage of time was marked only by the occasional irruption when Heaven withdrew its mandate from one imperial family, unrelated to the people they ruled over except by the unbridgeable gulf that separated them, and granted it to another (Chow, 2001; Fairbank, 1986, p. 133). In short, an epistemic shift took place in the space where the PRC is today in the period between the introduction of modern western thought into Imperial China in the mid-19th century, and the triumph of the communists in 1949. When Mao called the PRC ‘New China,’ he was speaking literally. Against an endless revisionism and the invention and re-invention of tradition that characterizes official historiography in the PRC<sup>48</sup> today, Mao’s recognition that New China was literally a break with the past, was an insight that later generations have forgotten, or ignore.<sup>49</sup>

#### **THE SOCIAL THEORY OF MODERN JOURNALISM IN THE PRC**

Rooting modern journalism in the PRC in the encounter of Confucianism and the West during the late Imperial era foregrounds two dynamics that are present in the literature, but not usually the focus of sustained attention. The first of these dynamics is a relatively comfortable association intellectuals traditionally have had with the power structure and the sense that journalism is a vocation with real social responsibilities. The

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<sup>48</sup> And Taiwan, though in the case of Taiwan the harking to an imaginary past is less the result of revisionism than the legacy of neo-Confucianism as one cultural ground of the Guomindang’s guiding ideology.

<sup>49</sup> For an analysis of the invention and re-invention of ancient Chinese history, the conceptualization by Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao et al. of the modern Chinese nation in racial and ethnic terms and their narration of the myth of the Han majority functional to the suppression of China’s cultural and linguistic diversity in the interests of building a modern nation state in the manner prescribed by European theories of race, nation and state see Kai-wing Chow (2001).

second is the ambivalence experienced by practicing journalists because of the danger in speaking truth to power, when the interests of the Party and government are at odds with journalists' interests or the interests of the people.

In the case of television, as a highly technical and professionalized medium requiring highly specialized managerial, technical, production and representational skills, from the outset what Gramsci (1971, pp. 5-23) would call "organic" intellectuals, that is intellectuals functional to production and reproduction, were key to the functioning of the medium, even if they were not in control. Moreover, in so far as journalists were the successors of what Gramsci (1971) called the "traditional" intellectuals, self-styled "men of letters, philosophers, artists" (p. 9) the medium was peopled from bottom to top by potentially disaffected employees, especially given their historical treatment at the hands of the authorities and their ambiguous position in Marxian theory, with implications for their insecure position within any state predicated at least in part on that theory.

I want to suggest that in these dynamics as much as in a nascent public sphere associated with the rise of a middle class or in the market are the seeds of a defensible form of socially responsible journalism that is being practiced in the PRC today, and that should be nurtured rather than dismissed because it does not meet the normative criteria of 'objective' journalism as its proponents imagine it is practiced in the West.

Two writers who have looked carefully at the history of Chinese journalism are de Burgh (2000; 2003a; 2003b) and Lee (2000a; 2000e; 2004; 2000f). Both scholars provide a detailed and sustained account of the development of Chinese journalism from its roots in the intellectual stratum and its development beyond the 'yellow press' of the treaty ports to become a medium which fostered the aspirations of a middle class growing out of the encounter of the literati with the possibilities of trade and mercantile professions,

even as that emerging middle class remained passionately defensive about China's position in the world.

Both authors trace the travails of the profession through the post-Imperial era up to the founding of the PRC and show the courage of the journalists, and the range and depth of their work. They also note how the trajectory of Imperial and Republican China's journalism, especially its editorial independence, was truncated by censorship applied first by the Nationalists, and then by the Communists and by institutionalization of the Leninist role of the media in the PRC as a Party/State mouthpiece.

Put another way, both writers point to a history of Chinese journalism up to 1949 that is not that dissimilar to the origins of the press in the West. Both systems are rooted in the growth of a restricted reading public among the monied and educated in an arguably Habermasian (1989) sense, as the shift from feudalism to mercantilism and capitalism creates a bourgeoisie.<sup>50</sup> However the rise of this class was cut short by the peasant and workers' revolution, and the bourgeoisie was cast aside, until the PRC begins to again develop the market and then capitalism after 1978.

Lee (1994a; 2000a; 2000b; 2000d; 2000e; 2001; 2004; 2000f) has provided perhaps the best account of the stakes in play with development of the market. In a series of articles, he examines three prominent social theories of the political economy that account for media reform in Imperial and post-Imperial China and then the PRC. The three theories that he examines are liberal-pluralism, socialism (reformist Marxism) and radical Marxism (China's New Left) (Lee, 2000a).

The project of a reformist Marxism developed in the PRC after 1978. It reflected the Hegelian re-reading of Marx then current in Eastern Europe and was seen by its

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<sup>50</sup> Elman (1998) dismisses attempts to apply Habermas to the Imperial Chinese context as a misuse of inappropriate theory.

proponents “as the major vehicle for advocating change within the system, without seeking a change of the system” (Lee, 2000a, p. 563). Its representatives include writers such as Su Shaozhi, Wang Ruoshi, Hu Jiwei and Sun Xupei (Lee, 2003a, p. 21). They argued for socialist renewal and reform, and called for attendance to the voice of the people, and not simply the Party (Lee, 2000a, pp. 565-566). These scholars were active in the 1980s in the journalism reform movement and backed leaders such as Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, only to become victims of the power struggles within the Party in the lead up to and aftermath of Tiananmen (Lee, 2000a, p. 564). Lee (2000a) argues that “[t]ighter ideological control since 1989, combined with the dazzling ascendancy of consumer culture amid China’s forceful articulation of its political economy into the process of globalization since 1992, have consigned these writers into exile, dissent and irrelevance to both intellectual and everyday discourse” (p. 564).

More problematic for Lee is the rise of the New Left in the PRC, a group of radical Marxists exemplified by the likes of Cui Zhiyuan, Wang Hui and Wang Shaoguang (Lee, 2003a, p. 20). According to Lee, the New Left offers “a timely radical critique of various brutal and distorted consequences of the state-led market reforms that have become manifested in the 1990s” (Lee, 2003a, p. 22). However, in their refusal to address what Lee calls the “despotism” of the Party/State and opposition to any possible accommodation with the market, Lee argues that the New Left is dangerously romantic. He criticizes Cui, for example, for wanting to reinvigorate “institutional innovation by remaking selective elements of Maoist experimentation dating back to the dreadful Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution” (Lee, 2003a, p. 22). Lee suggests that without a concrete action program the agendas of the New Left “remain no more than a preliminary outline for utopian imagining” (Lee, 2003a, p. 23).

For Lee (2000a; 2001; 2004) the only defensible alternative is liberal-pluralism, both as a model for media reform and as a critique of the distortions of the political economy associated with neo-liberalism and state control. Liberal-pluralism offers a bottom-up and politically motivated accommodation with the market that fosters the development of pragmatic possibilities in reform, including journalism reform and it recognizes the unconstrained state as the primary problem for a democratized press (Lee, 2001, pp. 5-7).

Unfortunately, as Lee himself is the first to acknowledge, liberal-pluralism has only ever been associated with failed democracy movements in Republican China (the 1919 May 4th Movement) and the PRC (Tiananmen in 1989) (Lee, 2000a, p. 560). However, he argues that this does not undermine the efficacy of liberal-pluralism as a critical theory of the abuses associated with the Party/State, and a viable alternative to top-down developmentalism. According to Lee (2000a), its proponents “interpret the [current] situation as an already weakened authoritarian party-state trying desperately and instrumentally to trade financial privileges for media loyalty. Competition, even in a distorted market, has lessened the ideological rigidity of official journalism while broadening the space for non-political discourses” (p. 562).

In accounting for the failure of liberalism and liberal-pluralism to develop in the PRC, Lee (2004) cites the familiar argument that capitalism is a precondition for democracy: “If Barrington Moore (1967) is correct in pronouncing “No bourgeoisie, no democracy” then it is clear that the Chinese society had not gone through capitalist development and there were no significant middle classes to speak of” (p. 14). Citing Berger (1986, pp. 79-81), Lee (2000a) suggests that capitalism is a “prerequisite for democracy,” since it provides a social zone “relatively independent of state control” (pp. 560-561). Following Berger (1986) for whom capitalist development and liberalization



are “necessary but not sufficient conditions” (Lee, 2000a, p. 561) for democracy, Lee (2000a) argues that “Chinese journalism cannot be expected to make substantial advances in press freedom without the backing of a viable market economy, but the existence of a market economy does not guarantee press freedom” (p. 561).

The caveat that the market is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the development of a democratized press is crucial to Lee’s argument, since it enables him to attack the distortions that the market has introduced into the PRC’s media since full blown marketization began after 1992, while retaining the market as a democratizing counter force to the coercive character of the state apparatuses and the distortions associated with the Party/State’s control of media (Lee, 2000d, 2001; Lee, 2003a). However, in holding to Barrington Moore’s “no bourgeoisie, no democracy” thesis, Lee (2004, p. 14; Lee, 2003b, p. 23) is unwilling to acknowledge not only the democratic aspirations of the revolutionary traditions in both Imperial and Republican China from which both the reformist and radical Marxists drew their inspiration, however anti-democratic their realization, but also treats as necessary what is historically contingent.

In a collection of essays on democratization in Asia, Friedman (1994a, pp. 1-2) traces the history of the concept of democracy back to the particular European experience of the development of democracy in association with the institutionalization of middle class representation in politics, beginning in 16th Century Europe. This experience was then de-historicized, universalized and conceptualized in opposition to Oriental despotism. In classically ‘orientalist’ terms in the manner in which Said (1995) uses the term, Montesquieu argued that Asia’s climate and geography inhibited liberty (Friedman, 1994c, p. 1). Hegel simply stated that Asia was beyond liberty (Friedman, 1994c, p. 1). While Marx theorized the Asiatic mode of production as a series of absences that set it off from the dynamism of Europe (Bottomore, 1983, p. 36). As a result, and by

definition, the Asian experience has not been, and cannot be ‘authentically’ democratic (Friedman, 1994c, p. 1).

In the case of China and the PRC, in his list of democratic movements, Friedman (1994a, p. 5) adds the truncated reform movement of late Imperial China to Lee’s list of the May 4th movement in 1919 and the student movement of 1989, and notes that their failure is typically explained with reference to the authoritarian and Confucian cultural roots of the political system, as anti-democratic by nature. Conveniently ignored is the democratization of Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, etc. (Friedman, 1994a, p. 5). Moreover, as Friedman notes, democratization primarily is a political not an economic project. In contrast to theories that must wait for the right conditions for democracy to emerge, “political action can rapidly change the conditions that matter” (Friedman, 1994a, p. 4). A paradigm example of this was the 1989-1990 “global surge of democratization, from Muslim Albania to Buddhist Mongolia, [which] dramatically negates the Eurocentric hypothesis that democratization rests on uniquely Western foundations of rational secularism, modernized middle classes, and radical individualism” (Friedman, 1994a, p. 26). In short, if Friedman (1994a, p. 5) is correct and democratization is paradigmatically a political project, then the market is neither a necessary, nor a sufficient condition for democratization.

The first sustained attack on the “no bourgeoisie, no democracy” thesis in its application within contemporary PRC media studies was launched by an academic associated with the New Left, Zhao Yuezhi (1998):

While some people still believe that China’s capitalist revolution will eventually lead to a democratic political system, there is no necessary relationship between capitalism and political democracy even though capitalism and liberal democracy have been ideologically and historically fused together in the West. (p. 188)

Prior to the publication of Zhao's (1998) work in 1998, non-Marxist analysts of media reform in the PRC had tended to accept as a truism that marketization is a precondition for democratization, tracing back to 1978 and the shift to advertising with its assumed links to reader and audience preference the starting point for a new democratization project in PRC media.

However, as Zhao and other New Left critics and their radical Marxist analogs in the West<sup>51</sup> argue, the substitution of participation in the market, including through greater choice in media, for political participation masks the degree to which participation in the market is radically anti-egalitarian in class-based political systems. In so far as the PRC is now developing as a class-based political economy in which the emergent bourgeoisie are closely linked to power structure, the market is functional to maintaining the political system, and poses little threat to the dominance of the Party/State. Unlike in developed capitalist democracies, where the process of evacuating effective democratic participation from politics in the guise of fostering participation in the market is as old as bourgeois and parliamentary democracy itself, in the PRC this process is relatively new, beginning in 1978, accelerating in 1992 and accelerating again with the PRC's entry into the WTO in 2001.

The substitution of participation in the market for political participation only further entrenches the anti-egalitarian character of the Party/State since 1978, when Deng in a paradigmatic application of modernization theory suggested some areas should be allowed to get rich as exemplars for the rest of the country to follow. The subsequent uneven development of the PRC poses no threat to elite dominance within the political economy. In the absence of even token representation in parliament as genuine workers'

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<sup>51</sup> Lee (2001, p. 5) lists Golding and Murdock (1991; 1997), Herman (1988), Mosco (1996), Schiller (1992), Smythe (1994) and Thompson (1990).

and farmers' deputies disappear not only from the Party/State apparatus, but also from the National People's Congress (Wang, 2006a, p. 36), the situation for the disenfranchised strata within the PRC is even more precarious than it is in systems where token representation in the form of parliamentarianism is taken for granted.

Taking as her starting point the introduction of the market into the political economy of the PRC, Zhao (1998, pp. 5-7, 196) uses post-Marxian theories associated with the writings of the likes of Stuart Hall (1982), John Thompson (1990) and John Hartley (1994) to show how ideology functions in the PRC to mask a state-driven project developed by Party/State elites that since 1978 has systemically disenfranchised the people from popular participation in politics, trading off democratization against participation in the market. At the same time, the Party/State is developing the market in a manner that benefits not only the country if GDP growth is used as the measure, but even more so benefits the Party/State itself, whose agents are best positioned to not only benefit from marketization of the state-owned economy, but through control of the media are also able to hide their activities in the market in so far as their private gain associated with stewardship of the market is in conflict with their obligations to the people as stewards of the state (He, 2000a).

As a result, as even liberal-pluralist critics of the PRC's New Left acknowledge, the gulf between the rich, which includes many actors within the Party/State, and the poor, the majority, is growing. But consistent with their belief in the democratizing potential of the market, these critics continue to argue that this trend is transitional rather than a structural feature of the system itself. Against this, the New Left argues that no political program which is based on further liberalization of the economy can reverse the trend of the relative impoverishment of a growing number of Chinese even as the country

continues to record record GDP growth and more and more people in real terms are lifted out of poverty.

This uncomfortable contradiction is the truth that some journalists and academics have begun to insist on speaking to power. But as already noted, the Party/State is determined to prevent the publication of embarrassing facts and data that would undermine its legitimacy. As a result, progressive journalists and academics are conflicted. Some speak out, and suffer the consequences. Understandably they are the minority. For most journalists personal interest and the imperative to serve the Party and government remains a stronger justification and rationalization for their silence than the demand for truth. Moreover, the organic association of journalists with the rising middle class, and hence their commitment to sustaining and developing the current system makes them willing accomplices of the system, even if they are not blind to its shortcomings. However, as I show in the following chapter, the work of Pan Zhongdang (Pan, 2000, 2005) and Pan & Lu Ye (Pan & Lu, 2003) suggests that silence does not necessarily mean consent, nor is visible inaction necessarily indicative of an inability and failure to act.

## **DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

Neither the paradox of the PRC's uneven development nor the trajectory of media reform seem promising of a better future for journalism. Despite the long history of the profession, and the demand to balance service to the Party/State with public service, both in the public pronouncements of the leadership and the cultural roots of the profession, for revenue and ideological reasons the Party/State has no intention of releasing its grip on media. Hence success for the liberal pluralist project for the reform of media through development of the market as a counter to the Party/State is unlikely. As Zhao and her

colleagues have shown, the commercialization of media in the PRC currently poses little threat and actually enhances Party/State control of media. As commercialization of the political economy proceeds, the Party/State is developing a class character which institutionalizes the anti-egalitarian character of media. Meanwhile media mask this structural adjustment of the political economy with increasingly complex ideological forms that buttress the power structure, which seeks to neutralize criticism and forestall political reform in a process begun in 1978 of shifting popular participation exclusively to the market.

Both Lee Chin-chuan and Zhao Yuezhi warn against binaries and the dichotomous framing of the problem for media reform in the PRC as a false choice when presented as an either/or choice between Party/State and market. Lee and other liberal pluralists continues to hold out hope for the market as a counter to the Party/State, in some form of accommodation. However, Zhao argues that media, especially news media, are caught between the Party line and the bottom line. For her, no account of the possible emancipatory potential of the market can ignore the reality of the emerging class character of media in the PRC and their continued function as a mouthpiece for the Party and government, which increasingly have turned to the market to shore up their position, even as the Party's traditional constituency among workers, farmers and the strata disenfranchised by development is increasingly ignored.

Nevertheless, as the gap between rich and poor in the PRC continues to widen, within media some journalists and academics have begun to address the growing contradictions of the 'socialist market economy' and 'socialism with Chinese characteristics'. Not surprisingly, the Party/State has hit back against media and the academy, launching a 'smokeless war' against small 'l' liberal and socially progressive elements in society, including in media. Whether these are isolated voices or the

beginnings of a new push for social justice and journalism reform is unclear, although the developing class character of journalism suggests it is unlikely.

The social theory of media reform operates primarily at the structural and institutional level of media reform. In line with that project, I am interested in the ongoing process of negotiated tensions within the political economy that is measurable as the pressure for change. But my focus is media practice. In the following chapter, I take up the challenge of Zhao's project to provide an account of media reform that does not place false hopes in either market, or Party/State. But rather than focus on the structural and institutional contexts that frame the possibilities of journalism, I want to include in this analysis the practice of journalism as a form of agency that brings pressure to bear on the contexts of its own development.

## **Chapter 5: Theorizing journalism in the PRC**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The idea that journalists have agency and affect the reform process is not new in PRC media studies. Several analysts, in particular Pan Zhongdang (2000; 2005) separately and in association with Lu Ye (2003) have written extensively on the topic. In focusing on practice, their work both references yet departs from that of the social theorists such as Lee Chin-chuan and Zhao Yuezhi, who take as their starting point the political economy of media reform. However, the two approaches are complementary. Only the foci are different. In one sense, their point of intersection is the structure/agency debate, which has characterized much social theory since the concepts of determinism and free will first clashed in the philosophy wars of late European romanticism and early European modernism.

Zhao (1998) suggests that no matter how detached an analyst hopes to be, “a political stance is always implicit” (p. 6). Nowhere is this more obvious than in the position one takes on ontological issues. Karl Marx wrote that people “make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past” (Marx, 1852, p. 595). This phrase captures a sentiment that informs much later materialist social theory, of which Zhao’s work is a paradigm example. Against the concept of free will, Marx posited a determinism that was never the mechanical soullessness alleged by his idealist critics, but recognition both of the limits to action and the ability of actors to alter the constraints under which they labor. This was not the agency of individuals, but recognition that class both enabled and constrained action. Following Marx, a number of theorists developed concepts that attempted to



operationalize his core insight into the manner in which agency is enabled and constrained by the historical conditions under which work is done.

In this chapter, I take up one of these concepts, hegemony, as a starting point for an analysis of how media makers negotiate change in the PRC. I then review the literature that shows how journalistic agency is central to a notion of contestation that both maintains and changes the dominant hegemony. This chapter functions as an introduction to the body of the dissertation, which follows. In the context of globalization and the development of television in the PRC, journalism emerges as a social practice that is both enabled and constrained by the institutional relationships in which it is embedded. Against a media-centric account of the power of news makers, this chapter functions as an introduction to journalism as social agency, outlining how it operates as a field and engages with and changes the dominant hegemony, reproducing its own limits, even as it seeks to extend them.

## **HEGEMONY AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR PRC MEDIA STUDIES**

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci (1971) writes of hegemony as:

The “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on the social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is “historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (p. 12)

Gramsci (1971, p. 160) considers hegemony the struggle for consent to domination in civil, as opposed to political society, which is the domain of coercion, although he noted that the distinction was methodological and in reality overlaps occur (Bottomore, 1983, p. 202). As later theorists have taken up the concept, hegemony has been used to analyze not only bourgeois society, but also to analyze socialist societies (Bottomore, 1983, p. 203). Zhao (1998, pp. 4-7) has picked up on this theme with respect

to the development of the PRC, using a definition of ideology derived from British Cultural Studies to show how the Party/State works, in part through media, to achieve consent to domination in a society where no conceptual distinction can be drawn between civil and political society, given the roots of the PRC's nascent bourgeoisie in the Party/State and their commitment to maintaining the conditions of political control that have nurtured their rise. Gramsci's (1971) own analysis, albeit not of China, is still apposite: "But since in actual reality civil society and State are one and the same, it must be made clear that *laissez-faire* too is a form of State "regulation", introduced and maintained by legislative and coercive means. It is a deliberate policy, conscious of its own ends, and not the spontaneous expression of economic facts" (p. 160).

Gramsci (1971) also gives intellectuals a prominent place in securing and maintaining the dominant hegemony, calling them "the dominant group's "deputies" exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). Gramsci identifies two different types of intellectuals: traditional intellectuals identified by their work as professional thinkers (ecclesiastics, scholars, scientists, theorists, philosophers, etc. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 7)) and organic intellectuals, whose task is organizational within any particular class.

The more high-flown definition of journalism as a vocation would give it a role typical of the traditional intellectual. However, through elaboration of the concept of the organic intellectual, Gramsci (1971, pp. 3-4) overcomes the distinction between intellectuals and non-intellectuals in the traditional sense, arguing that everyone is potentially an intellectual, and those that are, are so by dint of their social function, rather than the alleged quality of their thinking, or their attachment to the scholarly professions. This is relevant to the PRC because it breaks down any attempt to bracket off intellectuals as an indigenous species of ivory tower academic. Rather, intellectuals

include not only traditional intellectual roles such as journalism, but include the vast apparatus that fuels the bureaucracy and associated functions that constitutes the State in the PRC including instruments such as media. Moreover, given the roots of Chinese bureaucratism in Confucian intellectualism, Gramsci's expansion of the intellectual role is apposite.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Gramsci's work for understanding the role of the journalist in the PRC is attention to the contested character of hegemony. Against mechanical determinism, Gramsci outlined a concept of the manner in which protagonists actively engage in class struggle, including through media for control of the means of expression, dissemination and reinforcement of the dominant ideology. Although the term hegemony can have a static sense in which domination is given, as Daya Thussu (2000) notes, Gramsci's deployment of the term points to hegemony as a dynamic process wherein domination is only achieved at some expenditure of effort and must be ceaselessly reconfirmed. According to Daya Thussu (2000) hegemony "cannot simply be assumed or guaranteed and has to be renewed" (p. 68), suggesting not a state but a process that is contested and cannot be taken for granted. The contested character of hegemony points to ideological pluralism, reflective of the compromises between competing classes, groups and strata that constitute the successful defense of hegemony (Bottomore, 1983, p. 202).

Since the reform and opening began in 1978, contradictions have proliferated within the PRC's political and cultural economy even as the Party/State has evolved away from coercion more towards consensual domination. As noted in the introduction, attempts to think through these contradictions with concepts such as "ideological pluralism" (Zhao, 2008) and "unintended ideological pluralism" (Zhao, 1999) provide

insight into the manner in which hegemony is contested and defended even as the political and cultural economy changes in the PRC.

Analysts have applied the concept of hegemony to the PRC to show how the Party/State “absorbs the power of the market and shores up popular support by the dialectic of occasional coercion and winning of general consent” (Ma, 2000, p. 28). Although Zhao (1998) does not explicitly use the term in *Media, Market, and Democracy in China*, clearly hegemony is what she was talking about.<sup>52</sup> However, Zhao’s emphasis is less on the struggle for hegemony than the ideological forms produced in that struggle. In particular, she is concerned to analyze the character of media that are caught between the Party/State line and the ‘bottom line,’ even as the profit motive pushes media managers to develop media that attempt to balance an allegiance to both the market and the Party/State. Whereas liberal pluralism assumes that a dual allegiance of this type is unsustainable in the long term, Zhao’s work shows how the development of the market in the PRC as a project of the Party/State actually has strengthened rather than diminished the dominant hegemony, even as the form of the dominant hegemony has radically changed with the greater emphasis since 1978 on the market as a core structural feature of the political economy.

Although the paramount position of the Party/State within the PRC’s political economy has not changed since 1949, since 1978 the political economy as such has been changing radically and continues to change. Whether the reality today is moving towards a neo-liberal break with the past, or whether the Party/State may yet revive its links with the farming and working classes, which historically have been its core constituency, remains to be seen. Moreover, as Jiang Zemin’s “Three Represents” and Hu Jintao’s

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<sup>52</sup> I have confirmed this through conversations with Zhao.

“Harmonious Society” suggest, even if the Party/State does seek to revive its relationship with sectors being disenfranchised by the neo-liberal turn in the political economy since 1992, it will not be at the expense of the ruling, bureaucratic and entrepreneurial classes, but rather as part of an attempt to create an all inclusive coalition of interests that spans the entire political, economic and social spectrum. Friedman et al. (1994c, p. 294) note that this kind of “grand coalition,” of which they argue Asian democratization is paradigmatic is a general rule of democratization, which too often is thought of only from the viewpoint of the specific development of democracy in Europe.

Zhao’s (1998, pp. 4-7) re-definition of ideology as complex, contested and negotiated forces re-examination of the actual processes of change in the political economy, including in the political economy of media. Rather than assume that commercialization would liberate media from Party/State control and deliver it up to the demands of the market, more analysts now are examining the manner in which commercialization has impacted particular media sites. Part of this shift away from a one-dimensional analysis grounded in the assumptions of Western media models, in particular the US system of hyper-commercialized media, results from a growing awareness that even if the analytical schema developed to critique those media can be usefully applied in other institutional settings, if the different settings do not share a single or even similar social, political and cultural economy, the results obtained in one setting may be irrelevant in others.

Zhao’s subsequent work has been only one example of a commitment to the kind of analysis that remains wary of rigid ideological schema steeped in binary thinking about freedom and control and the over-determination of data by inappropriate theory, instead foregrounding the ambiguous and uncertain character of media reform in the PRC. Other analysts have taken a similar tack, although this is not to suggest that PRC

media is somehow unique. Ma (2000, p. 32) takes up Downing's (1996) challenge for media analysts to contextualize their work in the specific environments to which it applies, but argues that so long as the political economic context of media reform in the PRC is foregrounded, analytical models developed to account for Western media can usefully be applied. Ma (p. 32) calls for the boundaries between liberal and critical theory to be taken down so that appropriate aspects of both theories can be applied fruitfully to the PRC context. Similarly, Lee (2001), calls for a "critical synthesis at a higher level of abstraction... a dialectical perspective that will account for the mutually constituting, implicative, and embedded relationships of the state and capital" (p. 18).

Given the different ontological assumptions associated with liberal and critical theory, the former embedded in free will, individualism and the war of all against all, and the latter embedded in false consciousness, determinism and class conflict, rapprochement might seem unlikely. But the 20th and 21st Century PRC is not 17th and 18th Century Europe or later the United States. And a theoretical disjuncture in the one place and time does not rule out a theoretical conjuncture at another place and time. However, I am not going to attempt that synthesis. Rather, I want to take up an analytical theme that was developed as a means of avoiding the theoretical conflict by focusing instead on the practice of journalism.

#### **INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS AND JOURNALISTIC AGENCY**

Pan (2005) has referred to the troubling character of media theory that is forced to "pile up contradictory dichotomies such as communist-capitalist media and market-based Party-media system" (2005, p. intro) to explain in the static terms of Western-centric theory the dynamic character of media change in the PRC. Against the forced nature of this kind of theorizing, he calls for:

a dynamic account based on the recognition of the intrinsic interconnectedness between politics and emerging markets in the course of media change. It must incorporate the active role of the state and recognize that China's media change is a process filled with "contradictions and ambiguities" (Lee, 1994a) and constituted by "ad hoc adjustments, pragmatic experiments, and lively analytical discussion" (Watson, 1992, p. 1). It is a process of an uneasy collusion between the party-state authorities and media practitioners in preserving the Party-press system under a market economy. (Pan, 2005, p. intro)

Pan (2005) shifts the analytic focus away from macro-level analysis of the political economic structure, which too often assumes the kinds of changes it is concerned to explain and then cannot when those changes do not occur, and he criticizes the overly formal character of institutional analysis that focuses only on the types of structural and institutional changes required to meet certain normative criteria such as developing more press freedom without explaining how such changes might come about. He provides an overview of the work that has been done on institutional change in PRC media under impact of the changing political economy and demands placed on media as a result. However, he concludes that although analysis at this level:

tells us that institutional change was both the core of and prior condition for the ongoing media change in China ... it provides us with only a "thin explanation" of how institutional change takes place because it does not specify theoretical linkages between institutional change and everyday practices of media operation under specific historical conditions.

Although Pan does not call his own contribution "thick explanation," the analogy with Geertz's (1973) call for "thick description" is apt, as Pan takes an almost anthropological approach to media analysis, seeking in the minutiae of the everyday practice of journalism and the ongoing negotiation between journalists, media managers and regulators, that part of the explanation of institutional change that is a black box for political economy.

Whereas the social theorists are concerned to link institutional change to changes in the political economy, Pan focuses on the relationship between everyday practice and

institutional change. Both types of theory are concerned to explain institutional change, but their approaches have radically different starting points. One is concerned with clarifying the big picture, the other with focusing in on the messy detail that characterizes the negotiation, contestation and implementation of change in working media institutions.

Pan (2005) takes as his starting point the mutual constitution of social agents and institutions. He references the work of Giddens (1984) on the mutually implicative constitution of structure and agency and North (1990) on institutions as sets of “humanly devised rules” that only come to life in the actions of the social agents that constitute them. Pan (2005) argues that although media changes in the PRC have been a Party/State project from the outset, and that officials and media practitioners agree that media reform is not concerned to challenge the “principles and basic rules of the Party-press system” (2005, p. 7), nevertheless the PRC’s media reforms “are not a well-planned and coherent project with a clearly specified destination. Rather, they have been unfolding as a joint adventure into some unknown terrain by the collaborating party-state and media practitioners” (2005, p. 8). Media reform is an open-ended project that is characterized by what Pan calls “bounded innovation” (2005, p. 5).

Pan (2005, p. 4) associates “bounded innovation” with what he calls the two cardinal principles of media reform in the PRC: a) Deng Xiaoping’s call for “crossing the river by groping for the stones” and b) maintenance of the fundamentals of the Party-press system, i.e. acceptance of the overall Party/State control of media and their continued function as propaganda organs. He argues that the former condition is met by the constant innovations that media practitioners and managers are required to make to meet the demands of the Party/State, market and increasingly the public. The latter condition is recognition, especially since 1989 (Tiananmen) and the role media played in fostering open political debate, that no attempt to loosen the Party/State’s control of



media that is not approved by the Party/State itself will be tolerated, although as Pan crucially argues, that approval often comes in the form of post hoc legitimation, rather than approval before the fact.

Pan (2005) argues that the concept of “bounded innovation” provides insight into the manner in which media reform is both enabled and constrained in the PRC, permitting institutional change without systemic change. However, to my mind, Pan’s work begs the question whether “bounded innovation” does not lead to systemic change? To my mind, the structural changes to the political economy, most obviously through introduction of the market, less evidently in the changing relationships between the Party, State, legislature, consultative mechanisms such as the CPPCC<sup>53</sup> and judiciary mean that systemic change has been underway since 1978 in the PRC, including in media.

In particular Pan’s (2005) recognition of the ad hoc character of the reform process, especially the changes made to media practices with only limited prior consent, point to the very real impact that media practitioners and media managers have on the reform process. These informal changes go beyond what previously had been permitted at the institutional level then feed back into systemic change when the innovations are legitimized by the Party/State (Pan, 2005). When other media take up those new practices they become formalized and part of the media system. I.e. the media system has changed. From Pan’s account, media oversight and regulatory reform are constantly lagging media innovation. Although the Party/State often institutes change and even colludes in the informal practices that constitute innovation, Pan’s work points also to the phenomenon of the Party/State in some cases only being in control of the reform project in the limited sense of endorsing or rejecting institutional changes that practitioners are constantly

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<sup>53</sup> Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, an annual gathering of Party and non-Party elites that meets in Beijing each year at the same time as the sitting of the PRC’s unicameral legislature, the National People’s Congress.

undertaking, which then become systemic changes when formalized and made available to other media institutions.

As examples of this process, Pan (2005, p. 8) notes that the first advertisements in the PRC press were not ‘authorized’ by the *central* authorities, but a local experiment run by media managers in Shanghai with the “acquiescence” of *municipal* authorities. Only after the experiment, which both sides took at some risk to themselves, proved a success, did the practice become legitimized at a higher level. Similarly, major newspapers had begun to distribute week-end editions and diversify their content and output as a means of maximizing advertising revenues well before 1996 when the Party/State approved the formation of the first “newspaper group” (2005, p. 4). In the broadcasting industry, TV and radio stations were setting up shadow companies as a means of attracting capital investment well ahead of the decision in late 2001 to formalize the practice through the formation of media conglomerates.

Pan (2005) describes this process of “bounded innovation” as one fraught with challenges and danger for both media practitioners and its sponsors within the Party/State:

Sprouts of institutional innovations grow from the imperatives embedded in media practices. Translating such ideas and incorporating non-routine practices into institutional rules involve a fiercely political process of winnowing and molding among various options. This is a process dictated by the political-economic-ideological complex of the party-state hierarchy; it is highly charged, both ideologically and politically. (p. 10)

He continues that the power structure selects among the options and co-opts innovative practices: “any non-routine practice, on its way to policy or institutional rule, must go through the tunnel of such a political process and lose its sharp edge along its way. It gets molded to fit the existing system that is jealously guarded by the regime” (2005, p. 10) But to my mind, through the constant adoption of innovation, especially if

an innovation starts out as non-routine and then becomes legitimized, the existing media system has changed, no matter how jealously the regime guards it. In his conclusion, Pan comes close to stating as much:

The basic principles of the communist Party-press system remain heavily guarded and constantly fortified during the reforms... journalists must effectively manage the tensions between market forces and Party-press system in order to reduce political—as well as financial—risks in media change... their extra-official practices are not prescribed in the principles of the Party-press and/or approved explicitly by the authority of the regime at the time of their initiation... Devising such bounded innovations, while not challenging the legitimacy of the Party overtly, reveals a wide range of tactics of ideological incorporation, circumvention, or resistance, hence constituting, to paraphrase James Scott (1990), an art of resistance. (2005, p. 23)

Pan & Lu Ye (2003) have written about this ‘art of resistance’ in terms of the manner in which journalists cannibalize existing ideas and forms of journalism to create a professional practice that is institutionally acceptable, professional and personally satisfying, while evolving the profession. Drawing on the work of Certeau (1984) they discuss the ‘tactics’ journalists use to “resist, appropriate, and evade the [strategies of the] established order” (Pan & Lu, 2003, p. 217).

Typical of these practices are the manner in which the team at CCTV’s premier investigative shows *Jiaodian Fangtan* (‘Focus’) and *Xinwen Diaocha* (‘News Probe’) would beat the on-site censor by presenting two versions of a story close to air time, one poorly done with the ‘correct line,’ the other produced beautifully but pushing the envelope, forcing the editor to choose between the two. Another tactic was to air politically correct stories at sensitive times, like the annual meetings in early March of the NPC and CPPCC, and air more sensitive stories outside of ‘political season’ (Pan & Lu, 2003, p. 228).

In Certeau's terms, tactics like these empower the powerless, "who poach the established order and turn cracks in it into opportunities to act" (Pan & Lu, 2003, p. 217). Tactics are the "art of the weak" (Pan & Lu, 2003, p. 217) and show "how power is played – both organized and evaded – by focusing on what social actors do in their everyday lives" (Pan & Lu, 2003, p. 217).

These kinds of tactics are the stuff of journalism in the PRC. Moreover, they are exactly the practices one would expect from journalists culturally predisposed to both serve and critique the authorities. They also indicate something of the manner in which journalists manage their relationship with their superiors and the censors, and by implication how the journalistic field manages their relationship with the media system and political economic structure. In short, this is a picture of change not from the top down, or even from the bottom up, but a picture of the micro-physics of power in the Foucauldian sense, where the dominant hegemony is constantly contested and negotiated in relations of power that exist only in the exercise of power,<sup>54</sup> resulting in a process of constant though incremental innovation, which may or may not constitute revolutionary change, depending on the specific conjunctural relations within the political, economic and cultural economy.

Importantly, "bounded innovation" somewhat shifts the balance of power away from visible institutions such as the Central Publicity Department to the largely invisible practices of everyday working life. Rather than the caricature of journalists as marionettes of the Party and government and ventriloquist mouthpieces for Party/State propaganda, Pan & Lu (2003) show just how much control journalists actually have in the newsroom and the news making process, despite the power of the censorial and

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<sup>54</sup> I am indebted to Sun Wusan (2006, p. 43) for this formulation of the relations and exercise of power in the PRC context.

regulatory authorities and institutional constraints of the workplace, and how they exercise that control to change the norms of journalism in the PRC and hence I would argue the media system.

Neither Pan & Lu (2003), nor other analysts such as He Zhou (2003), de Burgh (2000; 2003a; 2003b), Lee (2000; 2004) and Zhao (1998) who have addressed journalistic practice in the PRC, are suggesting news media are a hotbed of dissidence. On the contrary, only through the mundane struggle over the operationalization of core journalistic concepts such as professionalism which masks the ‘art of resistance’ in everyday newsroom practice are journalists able to change the discursive context in which they work. In short, precisely because they are not dissidents but professionals, are journalists able to initiate and manage change.

Following Certeau (1984), Pan & Lu (2003, p. 217) argue that this is an example of social actors using a prevalent ideology as a resource in devising a diverse range of practices under specific historical conditions. Although each incremental change achieved through “bounded innovation” barely registers, when the practices of the entire profession, some half million practitioners by some counts,<sup>55</sup> are added up, some sense is possible of the agency journalists exert on the development of media.

On the ideology of professionalism, Pan and Lu (2003) take up a theme earlier developed by Lee (2000c) on the conception of journalists in the PRC. In this schema Lee outlines four ‘types’ of journalism associated with China’s and the PRC’s modernization: Party-press, Confucian intellectual, Professional (in the sense of an internationally recognized set of practices associated with concepts such as balance and objectivity), and Market-oriented (cited in Pan & Lu, 2003, p. 219). However, as Pan & Lu (2003) argue,

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<sup>55</sup> See above, p. 5

these are not static conceptions isolated within particular historical periods. Rather “they are interpenetrative, creating a scene of discursive construction, contestation, and appropriation in the reforms” (p. 218). As such, professionalism is not a single discourse, nor can it ever be reduced to a single discourse such as the demand for balance and objectivity that in the ideal but rarely if ever in practice legitimizes mainstream Western journalism. Rather professionalism in the PRC is a complex set of beliefs and evolving practices that enables and constrains journalistic work. It involves balancing Party discipline, culturally constituted social commitment and responsibility, objectivity more so than balance, and attention to the bottom line. As Pan & Lu note (2003) to the extent that ideologies are competing – for example, management may insist that professionalism means subjecting oneself to Party discipline, while a journalist may see her technical skills, knowledge and fame both within the newsroom and with the public as more important discursive parameters – the task of reconciling contradictory demands is not easy.

Within the complex of professional practices, social responsibility is highly regarded. De Burgh (2000) asks: “In what senses are Chinese journalists still arms of the government? The tradition of the Chinese journalist is of an intellectual engaged with the future of his or her country. The journalist is not an outsider, looking in, still less merely an individual professional with a personal mission or ambition, but a social activist” (p. 556). Swartz (2006), in a comparison of journalists at Voice of America, the BBC World Service, *China Radio International*, CCTV and *Xinhua* found that Chinese journalists placed greater “relative emphasis on justice as compared with their Western counterparts” (Swartz, 2006, p. 217).

However, perhaps justice is as elusive to Chinese journalists as objectivity and balance is to their Western counterparts. Pan & Lu (2003, p. 228) point to frustration and

burn out amongst journalists committed to more than the Party's definition of professionalism. He Zhou (2000b) writes of journalism as a form of spin control for the Party/State and "ideological dissonance" (p. 600) as a working hazard of the profession. With physical attacks on journalists in the field increasing, some insurance companies in 2004 listed journalism as the third most dangerous career in the PRC (after police work and coal mining) (Suhasini, 2004). Other analysts (Huang, 2000; Pan, 2000; Zhao, 1998) point to the easy option of paid journalism and the possibilities for bribery and corruption associated with embrace of the market. Nevertheless, as Pan (2005) notes, after an initial and confused infatuation with the market, 'serious' (as opposed to tabloid) journalists in recent years have become more suspicious of its impact on their professional aspirations, look to professionalism as an empowering practice and distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable levels of collusion between media and the market, although success in the market remains a key source of inspiration (Pan, 2005, pp. 16-19).

In short, the literature (de Burgh, 2000, 2003a, 2003b; He, 2000b, 2003; Lee, 2004; Pan, 2005; Pan & Lu, 2003; Zhao, 1998 et al.) clearly shows that journalists are not the marionettes assumed by mass persuasion and propaganda analysis that takes a caricature of the political economy of the PRC and derives from it a monolithic image of a Party/State invading and controlling every aspect of journalistic institutions through instruments of surveillance and control such as the Central Publicity Department and SARFT, resulting in a picture of journalism as a profession that is crippled by coercion, censorial intervention and regulatory oversight. By taking seriously the power of journalists to shape the discursive practices of their work, Pan (2005) and Pan & Lu (2003) in particular have shown how institutional reform in media is very much a project that is mutually constituted by the power structure and by media practitioners.

Moreover, and for my purposes this is the core insight of their work, they show how media practitioners manage the expectations of the authorities and are active agents in the reform process, changing the media system from within in a manner that forces the power structure to constantly negotiate the limits of the profession. Their negotiated approach to power also suggests by implication that media managers have exactly the same type of agency in negotiating with the CPD and SARFT, when it comes to higher level issues and that the ‘art of resistance’ is as relevant for understanding how media managers deal with regulatory and central Party authorities as it is for understanding how media practitioners negotiate the workplace.<sup>56</sup> The reality of media reform in the PRC is better characterized not by the Foucauldean frame of the panopticon, which might be how media are structured and appear to function, but as Sun Wusan (2006) forcefully argues by the microphysics of power expressed as a “complex strategic relationship in a particular society” (p. 43) where multiple interests compete for resources and dominance within the system. Against the static image of a coercive top-down system inured to change, something of the dynamism, vibrancy, challenges, opportunities and of course dangers associated with the PRC’s developing journalism can be seen in the implications of Pan & Lu’s (2003) analyses.

As a caveat, less evident in their micro-analysis of the impact of media practitioners on institutional change is the sense of pessimism provided by Zhao’s (1998) macro-analysis of the neo-liberal turn in the PRC’s political economy on institutional change. Like Lee (2000; 2001; 2003) et al., Pan (2005) and Pan & Lu (2003) see the market as providing a discursive space that frees up media workers from some of the pressure of the Party/State. However, Zhao’s (1998) work suggests that the corporate

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<sup>56</sup> For more on the contested character of power and the agency local media managers display in resisting the central authorities, see Sun Wusan’s (2006) excellent account, based on a Foucauldean argument, of one television station’s experience as an example of the microphysics of power at work.



alliance between the Party/State and capital in the PRC will not be radically challenged by the ‘art of resistance’ practiced by media workers, who increasingly have a vested interest in maintaining that alliance, even if they can force the Party/State to negotiate the terms of their co-operation.

The work of Pan (2005) and Pan & Lu (2003) does not directly reference Gramsci, although it does reference Zhao (1998), whose work provides an implied Gramscian frame for the analysis of PRC media. Whereas the work of Pan (2005) and Pan & Lu (2003) provides a means of understanding how institutional change is always a negotiated outcome managed by practitioners, the social theories of Zhao (1998) and Lee (2000; 2001; 2003) provide a framework for understanding the limits to institutional change within the structural constraints of political economic development.

In my analysis of the work of journalists at CCTV-9, I link these two levels of analysis through the work of Bourdieu (2005a; 2005b), in particular through its articulation of the relationship between structure and social agency in the concept of journalistic field. Despite Certeau’s (1984 ) antagonism to Bourdieu, I would argue that through the concepts of field and habitus outlined in the introduction to this dissertation, the macro-oriented work of the likes of Zhao and Lee can be linked to the micro-analyses of everyday practice that Pan (2005) and Pan & Lu (2003) focus on. Combined, this complex of approaches goes a long way to showing how media change (or don’t change) in the PRC.

Nevertheless as Zhao (1998) paradigmatically has shown, for critical and reflexive news media to further develop in the PRC, a structural change in the emerging corporate relationship between the Party/State and capital is required. What role journalists’ negotiation with the power structure might play in such a change can only be

assessed with future hindsight. However Pan & Lu's (2003) analysis suggest that negotiation is already underway.

## **DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

### **Discussion**

The use of a theoretical ensemble that links Bourdieu, Certeau, Foucault and Gramsci is obviously problematic on a number of grounds. Firstly, the theorists traverse different grounds. For Bourdieu, as a Marxian sociologist the economy looms large in a way that it does not for Certeau and Foucault, who are more concerned with issues of power. But at the same time, Certeau explicitly opposes his work to that of Bourdieu and Foucault. Gramsci and Certeau are both concerned with culture in a way that Bourdieu and Foucault are not. Nevertheless, despite this complex problematic, I believe that this kind of deployment of theory is valid on two grounds.<sup>57</sup>

First, all four theorists in one form or another address the relationship between structure and agency in the sense that for all four subjectivity is always already socialized subjectivity. Whether such a form of subjectivity is more or less malleable is less important than their common opposition to any form of individualism.

Second, each of the theorists separately can be deployed to answer particular and interesting questions. But if one is attempting to make sense of an ensemble of practices such as constitutes the everyday character of news making in the PRC, with practice understood as a social activity embedded in the political, economic and cultural economy, and enabled and constrained by censorial, regulatory and institutional regimes, that each have their own interests, then no single theory will suffice.

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<sup>57</sup> I want to acknowledge my debt to Joseph Straubhaar (2007), whose discussion of a somewhat similar conundrum led me to abandon attempts to theorize about CCTV-9 from the viewpoint of a single thinker.

Gramsci provides an understanding of the negotiated character of hegemony, but not of the minutiae of everyday news making as potential resistance in the sense Certeau uses the term. Foucault provides an insight into both the panoptic mechanism of surveillance and control associated with the CPD and SARFT and of the microphysics of power that constitutes the negotiation of hegemony and exercise of resistance. But his theories do not account for the hierarchy of power associated with the political and cultural economy of Gramsci and Bourdieu. Bourdieu provides an understanding of the spatial dimension of hegemony in the concept of field that is less developed in Gramsci's work with its focus on the historical dimension of hegemony. Finally, Certeau shows how social theory in its very insistence on taking the social as the unit of analysis, cannot account for particular instances of practice in all their variety, despite what they share as a class or field of practices.

Reliance on a single theorist tends to limit what a social scientist can do. When the object of analysis yields an answer to a narrowly defined question, no problem should result, but when a question is broadly defined, reliance can become over-reliance, which can lead to a certain one-dimensionality in the results. Faced with the task of theorizing about CCTV-9, and faced with the scope of the questions I was asking, I had to choose between one-dimensionality with the promise of theoretical clarity, and a multi-dimensional analysis and the problems for theory that such an approach poses. Given that CCTV-9 in all its complexity would not yield itself up to a single theory, I felt justified in the choice I made, but I accept that theoretical clarity may have been compromised as a result.

## Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined how the concept of hegemony can usefully be strengthened through deploying Certeau's understanding of how institutional change is negotiated through the everyday practices of social agents embedded within institutions. As a macro-level concept, hegemony provides a framework for understanding the corporate relationship developing between the Party/State and media in the PRC. As a micro-level concept, the 'art of resistance' shows how social agents negotiate with the power structure.

Linking these insights to the discussions in previous chapters, as a capitalist class emerges within the PRC, journalists remain instruments of the Party/State, doubly so given their support for and identification with the emerging middle class and the consent to domination that enables and constrains its rise. However, the cultural roots of journalism in the intellectual vocation and the intellectual compulsion to speak truth to power coupled with the social responsibility associated with the legacy of the journalistic function in the PRC's socialist modernization clash with the emerging class character of the profession.

Under impact of the PRC's globalization and the development of media, the journalist is a conflicted figure. Torn between disjunctural cultural and class identities, journalists are forced to constantly negotiate conflicting institutional, professional and cultural pressures. If media in the PRC are caught between the Party line and the bottom line, media makers are caught in a complex and constantly changing conjuncture of institutional forces enabled and constrained by the macro-level relationship between politics and the economy.

However, as Pan (2005) and Pan & Lu (2003) have shown, in the almost invisible traces left by everyday practice can be found an 'art of resistance.' Using Bourdieu

(2005a; 2005b) to link structural analysis with everyday practice, I now analyze one media institution, CCTV-9, for evidence and the meaning of those traces.

## **Chapter 6: Methodology**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the manner in which I carried out this research. The choice of a longitudinal study that is best described as a case study characterized by participant observation was effectively the result of the possibility of such a study and the chance it provided to answer the types of questions that only an extended case study can permit. These questions were reflected in the broad research questions outlined in the introduction:

- How do media institutions such as CCTV negotiate their overall relationship with the Party and government?
- How did news makers at CCTV-9 negotiate control over news making in their day to day work?
- With the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International in May 2004, over time what evidence of change emerged, given the plans for transformation of the channel?

The intermediate questions that linked the data chapters to the research questions were outlined at the end of Chapter 1: Introduction. In addition, in each of the data chapters that follows, I provide a series of secondary questions that show how each chapter answers the intermediate questions associated with that chapter.

To answer the research questions in terms of the intermediate questions, I arranged to join CCTV-9 as a ‘foreign expert’ with permission to do research into the news making procedures within the channel. A restricted set of methods followed almost inevitably. These methods were those typical of a case study: observation (in this case participant observation), interviews, and documentation (Babbie, 2001; Deacon,

Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In addition, as I also had the opportunity to systematically collect the scripts of news stories, I did so with the aim of surveying content as part of the procedure of triangulation necessary to strengthening the validity of the more observational and inter-subjective elements of the project. However, as the survey of content was also necessary to the argument that I make in the conclusion that is counter intuitive to some of the observational data and much of the interview data, the survey of content became an important intervention into what observation, interviews and documentation alone might have suggested.

Because of the range of data included in this dissertation and my particular status within CCTV-9, strictly speaking my approach was neither sociological (treating CCTV-9 as an object of study), nor anthropological (in the sense of attempting to observe without changing the researched environment). Rather I triangulated a survey of content with and against combined elements of sociology and anthropology through participant observation, with a strong emphasis on participation and inter-action through joining in the news making process, in-depth interviews and ongoing dialogue with my colleagues. The result was a highly personalized account of my time at CCTV-9, that was tempered by what a survey of content suggested that was not visible to observation, heard in interviews, or seen in documentation.

What I offer is a starting point for understanding something of the complexity and diversity of news making in the PRC, especially in terms of the relationship between political, economic and institutional structures and journalistic agency, seen from the viewpoint of journalists themselves, but refracted through what a survey of content tells us about their work.

My approach to understanding CCTV-9 was based more on inductive than deductive analysis. I emphasized induction because I wanted to reflect as much on the

theoretical and methodological frameworks that shape understanding of PRC media as much as I produced new knowledge about PRC media. But even in so far as I produced new knowledge about media in the PRC, three methodological caveats should be noted at the outset.

Firstly, the extremely personalized character of association which is the hallmark of the practice of relations ('guanxi')<sup>58</sup> in Chinese culture meant that my ability to interact with my colleagues at CCTV-9 was only as good as my guanxi. After spending over two years at the channel, clearly I had better relations with some people than with others. This opened certain pathways and closed others. For example, certain people became much easier to talk to and interview, others closed themselves off from me. I have no way of knowing what I missed by not talking to those people, with whom I was not able to form 'good relations'. Although I hope the sensitivity of the observations, coupled with recognition of patterns in work styles, etc. will overcome the deficiencies caused by my lack of 'guanxi', I make no claim that my observations are complete.

Secondly, because I was involved in the re-design of the channel for its relaunch on May 3, 2004 my participant observation was as much an attempt to change the environment in which I was working as much as it was an attempt to fit in. Under the conditions I was working, I would characterize my participation as immersion, a position

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<sup>58</sup> The role of guanxi should not be underestimated in Chinese culture, even if de-mystification of the practice reveals it to be at core little more than reciprocity in the giving and expectation of respect, and mutual obligation in practical matters (Castells, 2000a; Yang, 1989). Within the Confucian system, the law was held to be an inferior means of achieving and extending association and practiced only by those who had failed to learn or had forgotten the arts of self-restraint and accommodation of others in their everyday lives (Leys, 1997). Guanxi and its roots in reciprocity is thus incommensurable with Western culture, understood as culture rooted in the assumption of an individual's original sin and submission to the law (the word of God), over and against the social origins of the untainted individual implied by Confucian humanism. Moreover the extremely instrumental character of Western modernity (Abbey, 2004; Taylor, 1989) and its obliteration of the past (Ward, 2000) is at odds with the cultural layering and historical memory that are key to Chinese association. So guanxi practiced in the Chinese cultural context has a meaning that comparative sociology would ignore at its own peril if too much is made of the apparent similarities between Western and Chinese newsrooms and news practices.



sociology of the newsroom warns against (Cottle, Undated; Schlesinger, 1987). However, as I shall argue below, immersion handled carefully has its own strengths, which can add to an understanding of the newsroom and news making process.

Given my position as a consultant to the May 2004 relaunch, I must take responsibility for failure as much as success in the relaunch. In so far as I experienced satisfaction or disappointment in my role as consultant, I cannot be sure that I have not over-emphasized my own contribution in the case of success or under-emphasized it in the case of failure. When management asked me to be part of the re-design team, I was torn between the loss of objectivity that would entail and the insider's perspective that would accrue. Given that I would have access to some of the inner-workings of management, I felt the risk was worth taking. Whether this has been the case, perhaps others are better positioned to judge.

The problem of a participant observation that is best understood as immersion is closely associated with the problem of 'going native.' Although the literature (Babbie, 2001, p. 287) warns against it at the risk of losing one's scientific detachment, I felt the risk was worth taking given that the practices and values of a PRC news site might only make sense when understood from the viewpoint and interests of my Chinese colleagues. Moreover, as a non-Chinese with a limited grasp of Mandarin the fact that I could not culturally 'go native' gave me some hope that I would retain an element of the critical distance required in the research process to make accurate observations and measurements, although my lack of facility with the language also created obstacles for data collection.

Cottle (Undated, p. 54) offers a way out of the conundrum of 'going native', suggesting that the write-up can be constructed as a space and time some distance from the participant observation. To this end, in the write-up period I left CCTV and the PRC

to distance myself as far as possible from the research site in which I had been immersed as a fully fledged member of the production team for over two years. However, in so far as friendships formed during my time at CCTV-9, I have maintained contact with some of my colleagues from that time, and our conversations since I left Beijing in December 2005 cannot but have influenced the manner in which I processed the data and information I gathered during the study.

The third methodological caveat is that the specific findings of this dissertation do not lend themselves to generalization, although certain of my findings might be of use if researchers are seeking patterns in PRC media which result from the relationship between the conjuncture of forces that shape news making. The non-generalizable results are those which are site specific, in particular the May 2004 relaunch, which is a core focus of the dissertation. The results that may be of use to researchers who are seeking patterns in the development of PRC media relate to the manner in which news makers handle the different forces – political economic, institutional, regulatory, censorial and agency-related – that enable and constrain news making in the PRC. Although the way agents at CCTV-9 handled the conjuncture of political economic and institutional forces was necessarily unique, in so far as similar if not the same forces are at work in other news making sites some insight into how uniquely different agents might behave in a similar situations can be derived from my findings.

Bracketing these caveats, I open this chapter with a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the four types of data collection I deployed: participant observation, interviews, document collection and a survey of content. Secondly, I look at the processes of data collection as they were deployed and analyze my use of them. Thirdly, I discuss the IRB and the impact the rules of ethical research had on this dissertation. Finally, I

look at problems I had with the research and their impact on the data and my analysis of it.

## **CONSTRUCTIVISM AND METHODOLOGY**

For me, an important starting point in researching news making is to deploy methods that recognize the ontological presuppositions of the constructivist epistemology that informs my understanding of news as the social construction of reality. These presuppositions assume ontological relativism. Reality is local, experiential, and enabled and constrained by the discursive possibilities associated with meaning making materialized in practice. As a result of the over-determination of data by theory, facts are theory-laden. Theory saturates the available data and flows into the social structuration, both synchronic and diachronic, of the meaning making process. Reality is neither subjective nor objective, but socially constituted. Within a socially-constituted reality, one role of the researcher is to strive to understand how people construct their worlds. Knowledge is a condition and consequence of human activity, in the case of social science a construction that results from the interaction between the researcher and the researched.

One aim of research that assumes ontological relativism is to foreground knowledge construction. The key to understanding knowledge construction is to understand the self-understanding of the lived experience of those who are researched, bringing to light people's self-understanding of their social environment. The ideal research methods for this kind of activity are participant observation and interviews since these methods put the researcher and researched in a relationship of knowledge production that does not privilege either position, but allows for self-understanding to develop in a social context.

Acknowledging that ontological relativism privileges the viewpoint of the double subject (researcher and researched), in order to avoid the charge of subjectivism, I used triangulation to qualify the inter-subjective components – participant observation and interviews – of my research. Triangulation measured these components of the project against analysis of documents and a survey of content. Thomas Lindlof (1995) and John Creswell (1994), define triangulation as a way of stabilizing data by deploying a mix of methods. The strength of triangulation is its multidimensional character, enabling rich description and explication.

A second function of triangulation was its contribution to what Schwant calls “scientific realism” – a careful, and rigorous examination of data in a natural setting, in which objectivity (in the research process) has a regulative rather than normative character with an emphasis on how research is conducted, rather than what results it obtains (Sinha, 2002).

Scientific realism is compatible with constructivism. With its focus on the regulative character of research, scientific realism validates the knowledge claims negotiated in the phenomenologically grounded process of inter-subjective meaning making associated with constructivism. Given the lack of situated knowledge about news making in the PRC (at least in the English language literature), this study did not test theory, but sought to identify the grounds on which it might be built. Only in the conclusion do I outline a tentative overall theory of what was actually happening at CCTV-9. The bulk of the dissertation is given over to describing and analyzing that process.

## **DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

### **Participant observation**

The goal of participant observation at a news making site is to provide an inter-subjective experience of news making which enables the researcher to experience for herself what it is that news makers do (Babbie, 2001; Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999). At the same time, the natural setting of the observed environment lends a realism to the research that is lacking in methodologies that do not place the researcher inside the researched environment (Babbie, 2001). The roots of participant observation lie in anthropology and the Chicago school of sociology (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999, p. 252). According to Cottle (Undated) participant observation typically involves a) observation (while participating) b) attention to talk and c) the scrutiny of documents.

As the literature (Babbie, 2001; Creswell, 1994; Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 1999) notes, one strength of participant observation is that the news makers' self-understanding of their work is foregrounded. Secondly, participant observation allows the researcher to see what Malinowski (1922, p. 18) called the "imponderabilia of everyday life" (cited in Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999, p. 258). These imponderabilia are those quotidian phenomena news makers engage in such as continually monitoring news, working to constant deadline pressure, etc. that have become second nature, and as such do not easily yield to surveys and interviews, which may elicit honest and thoughtful responses, but may not be a reliable account.

Seeing the unseen is the result of a particular strength of participant observation – being there. The researcher is witness to the actuality of news making, and not restricted to second-hand accounts. Being there results in what is probably the greatest strength of

participant observation – the richness and color of the observations, what Clifford Geertz (1973) called “thick description.”

Of particular value in a participant observation of CCTV-9 was the possibility of researching the degree to which the “mouthpiece” metaphor for PRC news holds. This metaphor relies on a characterization of news media as instruments of Party and government policy, suggesting that journalists have rather less agency than is implied in the assumptions of editorial independence that underpin objectivist news theory. By taking part in the news production process at CCTV-9 and working closely with seasoned news makers, I was in a position to flesh out the mouthpiece metaphor, and determine to what degree it held, given the complexity of the news making process.

Through participant observation, I was able to open up and look inside the black box of political economic, institutional, regulatory and censorial contexts that are assumed to account for output in PRC news. I was able to shed light on the actual manner in which the mouthpiece metaphor worked, and to what degree it was valid. Against the assumption that news is a well-oiled and smoothly functioning instrument of policy dissemination, I was able to foreground the tensions and complexity of news making at CCTV-9, to find out, as Cottle (Undated, p. 47) asks, whether it was clean, tidy, organized and disciplined as critics assume. I believe I was able to overcome what Cottle (Undated) calls the “problem of inference” an “illicit leap from a critical reading of media content to inferences and about motivations or explanations accounting for this output” (Undated, p. 45).

Finally participant observation allowed me to see first hand how the newsroom coped with the task of relaunching itself as a news channel in a bid to compete more effectively with global news channels such as CNN-I and BBC-WS, while

simultaneously defending and promoting the PRC's image overseas and inside the PRC for English speakers without Mandarin.

***The problems of participant observation, 'going native' and immersion***

Against the strengths of participant observation are a number of weaknesses. A principal concern is 'going native' (Babbie, 2001; Cottle, Undated). As a former television news producer, the danger for me was multiplied. As Herbert Gans (1979) noted, the "hardest task in fieldwork is to study people who are politically or culturally akin to the fieldworker and who take the same things for granted" (Gans, 1979, p. 77, cited in Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999, p. 262). Although my research site was a Chinese, not a Western newsroom, my previous work (Jirik, 2000, 2004) pointed to the great similarities between elements of news production in the PRC and in the West, despite cultural differences.

However, (media) cultural differences did matter. Given the differences in editorial policy between CCTV-9 as an element of the PRC 'wai xuan' system and newsrooms I had worked in that were not part of a state publicity system (even if in cases they functioned as such in their focus on and constant repetition of government messages as part of the rhythm of 'normal' news work), I believe that at no point while I was at CCTV-9 did I lose my analytical distance to the point of "personally identifying with the studied value system" (Soloway & Walters, 1977, pp. 168, cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 1992), which Marshall & Rossman (1999) suggest is an indicator that one has 'gone native.'

As a result, although I was deeply invested in my work at CCTV-9, and fully emphasized with my colleagues' desire to make the best news possible, at no time did I believe I was working in a news system that was not subject to the regulation of SARFT

and censorship of the CPD. Equally however, none of my colleagues appeared to make this mistake either, suggesting a degree of reflexivity in relationship to the work place that calls into question the assumption of 'nativism' implied in 'going native'.<sup>59</sup>

Although it is important to let subjects speak for themselves, equally important according to Deacon et al. (1999) is the goal of attempting to move beyond description to explanation, which can only be achieved if what Philip Schlesinger (1980) calls "disengagement" (cited in Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999, p. 256) is achieved in the writing process. Schlesinger (1980) noted that it was only possible to achieve this distancing required for reflection and analysis once he was writing his second draft (cited in Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999, p. 257). Schlesinger's is a warning I took seriously. After failing to find the necessary distance to begin writing while I was still working at CCTV-9, which had been my original intention, I left Beijing in December 2005, before attempting my write-up.

Against my self-understanding that cultural and institutional differences prevented me from 'going native,' paradoxically, I did 'go native' to the degree that I became so immersed in my role in the May 2004 relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International that at times I lost myself in the project. However, by keeping a diary, I was able to provide an account of what happened in the critical months either side of the relaunch. Of course, the diary was also embedded in my immersion. But on reflection, only through the constant writing up of an account of my work and reflection upon what I was experiencing at the time, regardless of how much critical distance I had lost on the project in which I was engaged, was I able to make my sense of the relaunch in retrospect, especially when I compared my notes to what I experienced, what my interlocutors were telling me in

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<sup>59</sup> The 'native' is assumed to have an uncritical attitude to her own position. To 'go native' implies a superior, inferior distinction, which is unwarranted and not borne out by the facts. To 'go native' implies that the native is a child of nature, who has none of the critical reflexivity of a reasoning person.



interviews (all done after the relaunch) and what I saw in documents that related to the newsroom and the relaunch.

In defense of immersion, I believe that only by becoming immersed in the news making process and the design and implementation of the relaunch was I able to experience something of what my colleagues were going through as they grappled with SARFT's demand to change the channel. Therefore, I would suggest that the danger of 'going native' should not be over-emphasized to the point where a researcher loses access to invaluable insights. The real problem with 'going native' is not 'going native' per se, but failing to extricate oneself from that position at an appropriate point in the write-up process.

If my immersion in the news making process and the May 2004 relaunch was an example of what Deacon et al. (1999, pp. 262-268) caution against as the problem of losing sight of the point of being there and participation hindering observation, I also must recognize that the peculiarity of my position at CCTV-9 also meant that I encountered the problem of observation hindering participation (not getting involved enough). In particular, the problem of a dual language newsroom and my facility in only one (English) of those languages meant that not only were my observations hindered by my lack of facility with Mandarin but I was also limited in observation to the degree that facility with Mandarin would have fostered greater participation.

I do not know how much of the production process I missed because of the language issue. Against this, I assume that the length of time I spent in the newsroom and the fact that English almost always was the language of communication between foreigners and Chinese (although not amongst the Chinese), my interviews and my prior experience as a news maker made up for my lack of Mandarin. However, not being fluent in Mandarin resulted in a methodological blind spot that I can only acknowledge, without

being able to give a precise weight in terms of any compromise to the data collection and analysis that resulted.

Immersion was also part of another problem, the fact that I indelibly and deliberately tainted the research environment. Although I originally intended a classical participant observation, in which the researcher attempts to fit into existing routines and thereby minimizes disruption to the research site (Babbie, 2001), because CCTV management asked me to take part in the design and implementation of the May 2004 relaunch, consult program makers and train staff, my role as a participant was designed to change CCTV-9 as it became CCTV International.

Although the literature prevaricates on the issue of the researcher changing the research environment, it agrees as Babbie (2001) puts it that “[u]ltimately, anything the participant-observer does or does not do will have some effect on what’s being observed: it’s simply inevitable” (p. 278). The more important consideration is what effect might that change have? (Babbie, 2001, p. 278) In so far as management asked me to help with the relaunch of the channel, my interventions were well-intentioned, although I have no measure beyond the thanks I received from some colleagues and my sense that senior management appreciated what I was trying to do, that I succeeded in any way.<sup>60</sup>

Against the problem of immersion, I believe that the length of my stay – two and a half years, of which one year, February 2004 through January 2005, was the window of observation and data collection – brought me much closer to an understanding of my topic than would have been the case had I taken the classical research route of a relatively disengaged participant observation. In my diary, I attempted to be reflexive about my role

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<sup>60</sup> However, as the reader will discover in the body of the dissertation, I seemed to have as many detractors as supporters for what I was doing at CCTV. So perhaps my sense of having been a positive influence on the channel’s development is overly optimistic.

in the May 2004 relaunch, while retaining the critical edge that is expected of research. Whether this has been the case, I am not in a position to judge.

## **Interviews**

In addition to participant observation, as part of the social constructivist component of my research, I conducted a series of interviews with personnel at CCTV-9 from writers to senior management. Interviews are only one form of media talk. However, I dealt with the other forms – the ongoing banter of the newsroom, meal time conversations, chats over coffee breaks, an occasional social engagement outside of work that brought together CCTV-9 staff – as an element of the participant observation, since they were part of the everyday process of working in a news making environment. Many of these elements of talk were recorded in my diary.

An interview is somewhat different, as it is a structured conversation. Lindlof (1995) suggests that an interview is not an objective report about “thoughts, feelings, or things in the world,” but the talk of “socially situated speakers” whose information “must be examined within the context of all information collected regarding the interview topic and relevant research questions” (p. 165-6, cited in Christensen, 2001, p. 110).

Methodologically the interview is a hermeneutic exercise in which ideally the interviewer and interviewee come to a common understanding about something through dialogue. As Deacon et al. (1999, pp. 279-286) point out, as a form of oral history, the interview can provide particularly rich insights, which would otherwise remain invisible, unavailable to research because the everyday thoughts of media makers are not the ‘stuff’ of history, and are rarely recorded, but instead remain part of the background hum. Through interviews, I was able to flesh out issues that were relevant to the news making process that I had already identified through participant observation. Interviews also

enabled me to get a much more detailed understanding of what I was doing, seeing, and recording, than would have been the case had I not had the chance to sit down with staff and talk to them at length. Finally, in so far as CCTV-9 was a newsroom, it had distinctive dynamics and language of news making. And although I was familiar with much of the news making process, I was able to investigate atypical features of news making deployed at CCTV-9 by interviewing staff about their work.

Although an interview is similar to participant observation in its reliance on a constructivist epistemology, as Deacon et al. (1999) note, interviewing is more of an intervention into the research site than is observation. In this sense, the researcher is very visible in the interview. Data collected through interviewing is therefore epistemologically different from data collected through observation and from documents, because the researcher is always already present in the interview data (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999, p. 292). However, like participant observation, the data obtained through interviews is relative. The combination of interviews and participant observation provided a much richer understanding of the media environment than would either approach alone. But ontologically both methods remain within the realm of constructivism. In order to better fix in space and time the self-understanding CCTV-9 staff had of their work and understanding I had of their work and their self-understanding of it, I deployed the analysis of documents and a survey of content as a third and fourth dimension of triangulation.

### **Documentation**

The most important document that I kept from CCTV-9 was my diary. However, I do not deal with it here, but below, as a recording device for participant observation. By documentation I mean the types of documents that were not central but ancillary to

participant observation. Apart from the scripts used for the survey of content (see below), all the documentation I acquired from CCTV-9 came from my participation in the news making process, including the design and relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International.

These documents consisted of papers that senior management distributed as part of the redesign process, papers such as the SARFT and CPD directives that entered into my view as part of my work in the newsroom and papers issued by different members of management and by the head of the Foreign Experts that pertained to the work place. Examples of the latter were schedules, emails, etc. I also kept all the emails staff circulated among themselves that included me as an addressee, as these provided a rich insight into quotidian elements of news making and staff reflections on the work place and their colleagues.

Creswell (1994) notes that the strength of documents is that they enable a researcher to obtain “the language and words of informants” (p. 150), allow for convenience of access, and are unobtrusive. The drawbacks include the difficulty of acquiring documents and their handling and storage. Nevertheless, to my mind, the strengths of documentation outweigh the drawbacks, especially as a material record in a case study that was very much a personal account of work at CCTV-9. As Marshall & Rossman (1999) note, researchers “supplement participant observation, interviewing, and observation with gathering and analyzing documents produced in the course of everyday events or constructed specifically for the research at hand” (p. 116).

### ***The problem of documentation in the PRC***

Although documentation should be a fairly straight forward question for a research project, documentation at a state-owned enterprise in the PRC has a special status that can cause problems for the researcher, and more importantly for the research

site and its members. The key problem with government-related documents in the PRC is that the authorities define as a state secret many documents not released to the public. But they do not designate these documents as state secrets, only labeling them as such after their unauthorized publication and alleged misuse (Esarey, 2006; He, 2004; Sun, 2001, 2004; Yardley & Kahn, 2006).

In order to avoid the problem of documentation, with a single exception, I made a point of using in this dissertation only documents that were part of the everyday day news making process and either available to all members of staff or made available to me as part of the news making process, including the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International. The single exception to this self-imposed rule was a fax that SARFT sent to the zhubian's (news editor) office with a directive about coverage. Although I refer to this document, I did not copy it but wrote a note in my diary about it.

### **Survey of content**

I deliberately do not use the term 'content analysis' to describe the survey of content, or strictly speaking survey of bulletin rundowns and scripts (see p. 176 for an explanation), that constitutes Chapter 11 of this dissertation, since my use of content cannot do justice to the method, classically understood, with its sophisticated techniques and practices. My use of content was quite basic: statistical analyses of a limited range of variables derived from rundowns and scripts. My goal in surveying content was to measure claims made by news makers about their work against their work.

Hansen (1996) notes with respect to content, that the characteristics of data isolated for analysis "should relate directly to the overall research questions or hypotheses" (p. 137) that prompted the choice of method in the first place. The survey of content served two purposes in this dissertation. Firstly, it provided the only empirical

evidence of the production process. Secondly, as empirical evidence it was used in triangulation of the observation, interview and document related data.

In so far as the survey of content did not tally with claims made by news makers, my intention in discussing such contradictions was not to expose false consciousness, which is an ideological issue. Rather, I wanted to show how content can shed light on elements of news making which news makers do not pay attention to, but not for ideological reasons so much as for the reason that on the one hand the more quotidian an element of news making the less is the news maker likely to pay it any particular attention. On the other hand, regardless of what news makers think they are doing, the institutional environment and available sources invariably enable and constrain what news can be made.

What I learned at CCTV-9 is that news makers, however reflexive, face operational constraints which shape the news in particular ways, and operational blind spots which render invisible to them certain elements of their work. The content surveyed in this dissertation provided material evidence of the news making process. As such, it showed the manner in which the political economic, institutional and regulatory environments shaped news. By surveying content and discussing output with media makers, my understanding of the production process was enhanced. Moreover, should my colleagues and interlocutors at CCTV-9 read this dissertation, their self-understanding of their work might also be enhanced.

Surveying content was also not an attempt to reduce to a set of outputs the very real complexity, sophistication and occasional messiness of news making. Rather, it strengthened my analysis by tempering the regulatory aspect of scientific realism. The survey of content presented here was concerned to further enrich the picture of news

making at CCTV-9 by using content to show the relationship between news makers and their product.

If news making is seen as a manufacturing process, then news makers play the role of workers who assemble news from its component parts. What sort of product emerges from this process is a fascinating topic in itself. But as part of a case study, what the news is saying is less important than how it is made to speak. What are the structural and institutional frames that enable one kind of product, over and against another? What mix of components go into the product and why? Is this the best possible product under the circumstances? How would news makers do their work differently, if they could? Are the workers and managers happy with the product? These are questions of discovery, relevance, richness and applicability for which a survey of content provides at best a starting point.

### **Summary of procedure**

In the preceding sections, I have outlined the process of triangulation that was core to developing a systematic and rigorous database of information about CCTV-9. Through participant observation, interviews, documentation and content research, I sought to show the logic of the news production process and the relationship between inputs and outputs and the manner in which this relationship was articulated by the agency of news makers in the social construction of reality. As a participant my work fed back into the production process. As a member of staff tasked with helping in the redesign of the channel and the training of journalists, I changed the reality under construction.

I have characterized my position at CCTV as one of immersion, rather than participation. However, I also sought to strengthen the analysis of my participant



observation (understood as immersion) through systematic rigor in data collection, including in keeping a diary, doing interviews, collecting documents and surveying content. Through this complex of methods, I have constructed a narrative which I believe is a relatively stable and detached account of the process of change in which I was involved.

#### **DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND WRITE-UP**

In the following section, I discuss how I deployed the methods of data collection discussed above.

#### **Participant observation**

##### ***Data collection***

Site: China Central Television, CCTV-9, Beijing

Time frame: February 2004 – January 2005

According to Creswell (1994, p. 149), the key questions for data collection in a participant observation are what is to be recorded, and how? What I recorded was evidence of every aspect of the news making process to which I had access. My primary roles at CCTV-9 were copy editor, trainer to some junior writers, consultant to the reporters' group and World Insight<sup>61</sup> team and consultant to senior management.

As a copy editor, I had access to the following aspects of news making:

- Newsroom management by the zhubians, directors and head of the foreign experts
- Story selection by zhubians and directors
- The manner in which writers, copy editors and political editors processed stories

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<sup>61</sup> Because World Insight was not part of General News, their work and my work with them was peripheral to this dissertation.

- The everyday dynamics of newsroom activity, from banter among staff to disputes over stories, staffing levels, workload, pay scale, etc.
- Relations between management and production staff
- Relations between CCTV-9 staff and technical staff who reported not to CCTV management, but to the CCTV Technical Section, which was responsible for all the channel's technical needs
- Relations among the copy editors and between the copy editors and Chinese staff

As a trainer, I had access to the following aspects of news making:

- The different levels of skill with which new Chinese staff arrived at the channel
- Insight into the manner in which staff were allocated to production teams
- The testing system which management used to decide on staff rankings and pay scales
- The process of in-house development of staff associated with particular shows on which I worked
- Relations between newly arrived and more experienced staff members, both Chinese and foreign.

As a consultant to the reporters' group, I had access to the following aspects of their work:

- Story development
- Writing
- Production
- Post-production
- Observation of the internal dynamics of the group
- The relationship of the group to the rest of CCTV-9

- Reporters' self-understanding of their work as evident in the discussions they had about their work

As a consultant to management, I had access to the following aspects of news making:

- The manner in which staff, both Chinese and foreign were chosen for the channel
- The process of channel development associated with the May 2004 relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International
- Relations between managers and between management and outside consultants, such as those provided by News Corporation
- Relations between management and staff, both Chinese and foreign
- Access to management's hopes for development of the channel, reflected in conversations between managers at meetings and with managers as part of my consultancy

Observation was conducted through day-to-day participation in the news making process. As a 'foreign expert', I worked between four and five shifts per week. During that time, I recorded my participation and observations in a diary, which I kept for the twelve month period from February 2004 through January 2005.

I had intended to keep notes during my work time, but I found that this was both impossible to do for two reasons. Firstly, copy editing is a job that requires intense concentration on stories that are being processed because of the conveyor-belt and deadline driven character of news making. During that time, taking notes was impossible. Secondly, and paradoxically, in the periods of down time between stories, I also found it impossible to take notes, because no work was being done, and I found I was drawing unwanted attention to myself when I was writing or working on my laptop in the newsroom, while my colleagues were taking a break. As a result, I discovered that the

only practicable and unobtrusive method of keeping the diary was to write it outside of the work place, after I had returned to my flat at the Friendship Hotel at the end of the day.

Keeping a diary in this manner influenced the data in several ways. Firstly, the immediate impact of my impressions was lost through the normal process of memorization and recall. Even only hours after a shift, I had the sense that I was writing from memory rather than with a direct sense of observing or participating in events. Moreover, on occasion it was either impossible or inconvenient to write up my diary immediately after a shift. In these cases, I would write it at the earliest possible opportunity. But this only compounded the sense of distance that had accumulated between the record and the events it referred to.

As a result, at best, the diary can be described as a narrative account of my impressions of what I thought had happened during the day at work. In short the data was always already influenced by my reflections upon and distance from the events recorded therein. As such, my diary was a valid and reliable account of my own thought processes about the news making process, but not a series of notes taken at the time of my participation in it and observation of it.

Despite this, the diary did function as a record to which I could return time and again in the write-up to validate information I derived from other sources. And it served as a vehicle of moving from description to explanation in my account of the news making process. Particular instances of news making that I recorded triggered thoughts about the how of news making that often went beyond the who, what, where and when of participant observation to the why.

### ***Data analysis***

Renata Tesch (1990) argues that there is no “right way” to analyzing data in a participant observation, and that the process is eclectic (cited in Creswell, 1994:153). Creswell (1994) reminds the researcher to remain open to alternative explanations than those originally considered for findings. Key then in participant observation is the process of conducting analysis simultaneously with data collection, interpretation and narrative writing. Although my diary was at best a very rough first draft of this dissertation, it did fulfill some of that analytic function. However, the more rigorous analysis was carried out after I left CCTV.

Because of the sheer quantity of data participant observation generated, analysis consisted in the first instance of “data reduction.” I took the data collected and reduced it to manageable categories through the identification of patterns and themes. Through deconstructing and reconstructing the data, I attempted to build a holistic and consolidated picture of news making at CCTV-9.

The process of data reduction involved firstly the reading and re-reading of my diary with the intent of developing a sense of what emerged as the major themes associated with the news making process and the May 2004 relaunch. Secondly, I read through the documents I had collected, discarding those that were not relevant to the themes emerging from the diary and from reflection on the interviews (see below).

Finally, I began comparative analysis of data derived from participant observation, interviews and the survey of content setting up a feed back circuit that fed into the data chapters as I developed them.

### ***Write-up***

Originally, I had intended to produce a draft of this dissertation during my time at CCTV. However, the problem of immersion I outlined above prevented me from gaining

the distance necessary during my time at CCTV to periodically step back from what I was doing and maintain the attitude of skepticism, essential to the kind of research such as “grounded theory” (Babbie, 2001, p. 284) that generates data and theory simultaneously. My work was therefore more in the mould of a classical case study, with write up following data collection, for which I used Schlesinger’s (1987) *Putting Reality Together* and his discussion of news making at the BBC as a model.

Although I stopped recording my observations in January 2005, I remained at CCTV until December 2005. I spent most of 2006 analyzing my data and I did not begin the write-up until late 2006, after I returned to the United States in August of that year. Because of the time lapse between data collection and write-up, the importance of my diary became extremely clear as I attempted to make sense of what I had been experiencing, now armed with the critical distance necessary to evaluate the data.

In the presentation of the data and its analysis, I have opted for a reportorial style inflected by first person observations. My reason for so doing was to present a readable dissertation that a non-specialist audience could access, since several of my former colleagues at CCTV have expressed an interest in reading my work. At the same time, the use of the first person acknowledges that in the final analysis this is not a scientific work, although it is grounded in scientific realism. Although I use statistics and present data in tables to summarize findings in an easily accessible form, this dissertation is first and foremost an historical document, an account of one person’s observation of and participation in the news making process at CCTV-9 and relaunch of the channel as CCTV International.

As a case study, the unit of analysis was the newsroom as a whole. My history of a brief period in its development is presented as a holistic narrative, segmented into the core elements of the news making process: editorial, production, reporting, and content.

However, although my work is a history first and foremost, it does attempt to explain how the CCTV-9 newsroom worked with an eye to its further development. Moreover, elements of my work, in so far as they relate to the institutional and regulatory context in which CCTV-9 was embedded, have some value towards generalizing about certain aspects of news making at other, similar sites (*China Daily*, *China Radio International*, etc.) within the PRC that are embedded in the same or similar institutional and regulatory contexts.

## **Interviews**

### ***Data Collection***

A good interview requires planning. My own plans for interviews involved a structured set of questions, with slight differences for different levels of personnel within the news making process (see Appendix 1, p. 464 for sample question sheets). I attempted but failed (see below) to interview a representative and diverse but not random sample of CCTV-9 personnel. The aim for representative diversity at CCTV-9 promised what Lindlof (1995:126) calls “maximum variation sampling” (cited in Christensen, 2001:104). In this form of sampling, individuals are selected according to variations in their levels of experience, age, gender, etc. Within CCTV-9, I drew my sample from management and editorial at all levels, with the exception of the political editors, whom I was unable to interview (see below). I also interviewed one media theorist<sup>62</sup> and one outside consultant to CCTV. The total number of interviews was twenty-three.

Among personnel at CCTV-9, in choosing whom to interview I originally attempted to include at least two of every category of worker associated with the making

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<sup>62</sup> The theorist was Sun Xupei, who was responsible for innovations in media theory tolerated by the Party post-1978 into the late 1980s, but was himself purged when his theories were published (Sun, 2001). As my dissertation developed, my focus shifted away from what I had discussed with Sun. As a result, no part of that interview is referenced in this work.

of general news. For the most part, my potential interlocutors were enthusiastic about the possibility of speaking, since they saw participation in my study as a chance to explain their experience of working at CCTV-9. Many also saw it as a chance to clarify what they considered ill-informed speculation about news making in the PRC in the press and on blogs.

Although the process of choosing potential interviewees was guided by a concern for maximum variation in the sampling, I was constrained by suspicion of my work on the part of several persons with whom I asked to speak. By the time I stopped interviewing, I was aware that 'convenience sampling' best explained the method by which I had chosen my interlocutors, although I did have a fairly good maximum variation sample in any case, covering almost every level of news maker from management to writers. The following list of twenty-one indicates the final number for interviews for each category: senior managers (3), managers & zhubians (8), directors (1), reporters (3), political editors (0), copy editors (1), writers (2) and anchors (3).

The sample was biased towards senior management, management and zhubians. I only managed to interview one director (I did not have particular good relations with the directors, and the only other director I asked for an interview declined). However, four of the six zhubians (one was interviewed twice) had previously worked as directors, so I was able to ask them about directing in addition to their work as zhubian. I felt my own position as a copy editor made interviewing more than one copy editor somewhat redundant. Missing from the interviews was an in-depth discussion with any of the political editors. Although one originally agreed to speak with me, he later withdrew permission. Another whom I asked declined to be interviewed. I did not ask the remaining two for fear of drawing attention to my research, given my interest in editorial control and censorship. Apart from the political editors, one Chinese and one foreigner



whom I asked declined the request for an interview. The agreement rate following interview requests was therefore twenty-three out of twenty-seven (85%), which I considered an acceptable success rate.

Although convenience sampling is rightly criticized in the literature for its efficiency at the expense of information and credibility (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 78), I only stopped the process of seeking interviewees once I had a cross section of the news makers except for the political editors and responses began to show, on an initial reading of the data, signs of continuous repetition of themes with less and less new knowledge emerging. Therefore, apart from the political editors and directors, and counting myself as a copy editor, I had achieved my original goal of interviewing at least two of each category of worker.

However, I also realized on reflection that with one exception I had not interviewed people with whom I had poor relations. The exception was a manager for whom I had a lot of respect, but with whom I had a difficult relationship. I was extremely pleased at getting that interview, which proved a fruitful addition to the sample.

I have already discussed (see p. 141) the problem that ‘guanxi’ (relations) poses for someone attempting to research a Chinese social or working environment. This problem was particularly troubling to me in attempting to get as broad a range of interviewees as possible. At the time of doing the interviews, I was unaware that I had biased my choice of interviewees in this fashion. But I realized after I had left CCTV-9 that in the final analysis, I had almost invariably sought to interview people whom I liked or respected. On reflection, I am unsure whether the sample would have benefited from attempting to interview excellent news makers with whom I had poor relations, since excellent news makers constituted the majority of those interviewed. Conversely, although a potential lacuna in information follows from the failure to interview news

makers with whom I had poor relations, I am unsure how much their inclusion would have added to the study, in so far as I tended not to like news makers whose work I did not respect, and such work was not representative, in my judgement, of the general tenor of work at CCTV-9.

The interviews with CCTV-9 personnel fell naturally into two categories: management, news makers. Each of these categories of worker demanded a slightly different set of questions, although the basic set of questions was the same for each (see Appendix 1). Each set of questions was driven by the function of the category of worker involved. Questions to management pertained primarily to management, reporters to reporting, etc. Within the newsroom, slightly different questions were required for the sub-categories involved in the news making process: zhubian, director, copy editor, writer and anchor.

I prepared two interview templates. Template 1 (see p. 464) covered the following categories of worker: executive producer, zhubian, director, copy editor, writer, reporter, anchor. However, the interviewees were given great control to guide the interview, so the final transcripts usually did not match the templates. In addition, the template section E) The work of the [job category] was adjusted slightly for each of the job categories. Template 2 (see p. 471) covered senior managers. I also prepared questions for two other interviewees, whose templates I do not show here in the interests of protecting their anonymity, since their roles in relationship to CCTV-9 were unique and thus these persons are potentially recognizable from the interview questions I asked. I did not prepare a template for political editors, as I did not interview any political editors.

Although the May 2004 relaunch was a major focus of this dissertation, the questions I asked in interviews about it were relatively few, primarily because the early interviews suggested that staff, apart from senior management, did not treat the relaunch

as a significant point in the channel's development. However, in an interview when a staff member did have a lot to say about the relaunch, I allowed them to do this and shift the interview away from the template.

My approach to an interview was to begin with a specific set of questions, but to make it open-ended. As such, in many cases, the interviews veered away from what I had planned. In each such case, I allowed the interview to take its own course, since I see an interview as a dialogue not a closed set of questions, regardless of each particular answer. By remaining open to the concerns of my interlocutors, I was able to allow them to steer the conversation, if they wished. Although I had a tentative set of questions for the two categories of interviewee, I did not restrict myself to these questions. To my mind the point of the interviews was to allow the interviewees to express themselves. Any attempt to put constraints on expression by limiting dialogue to the set of questions I had would have closed off my research site to potentially rich findings. Therefore, for the purposes of understanding how I conducted the interviews, the questions outlined in Appendix 1 should be treated as a starting point for the interviews, not a framework.

The general tenor of the general news and reporter interviews focused on what each person did, how they felt about their work, the pluses and minuses associated with working at CCTV, who they were, their past and their ambitions for the future. In addition, I asked each category about relations with other categories, and how the dynamics of news making were reflected in the teamwork or lack of teamwork they experienced in the channel. For senior management, I wanted to know how the channel developed and what were their plans for the future were, as well as how they felt about the channel's successes and failures through to late 2004, especially in the context of the design and execution of the relaunch. More broadly, each interviewee was asked about issues of censorship and the institutional and regulatory environments that enabled and

constrained their work. They were also asked hypothetical questions about the potential for the development of journalism in the PRC and what they felt should be done or not done to realize the changes, if any, they felt the news making system required.

Each of the interviews was conducted one-on-one at a mutually agreed site. I recorded each interview on a cassette tape. The shortest interview ran a little under an hour. The longest ran almost three hours. Although the length of almost all the interviews was determined by exhaustion of the questions, in one case (the shortest), the interviewee cut short our discussion because her shift was about to start.

With the exception of the single interview that was cut short, at the end of every interview, I asked the interviewee whether they had anything to add. When they did, that was recorded too. However, almost all the interviewees had nothing to add beyond what had already been discussed. Nevertheless, it was at this stage, early on in the interview process that one of the most interesting methodological problems I encountered arose. One of the early interviewees suggested that I was asking the wrong questions, and that my concern with issues such as censorship were irrelevant to the main concerns of the majority of workers, who were primarily and almost exclusively concerned by issues of pay and conditions, and the dynamics of the news making process itself.

That criticism prompted me to reshape my questions to the extent that I felt the criticism was justified. In particular, after that interview I paid much more attention to the dynamics of news making and questioned interviewees where possible about their finances and work conditions and their understanding of the internal politics of the channel and its development. Although almost all my interlocutors were reluctant to go into detail about pay and conditions, a picture of dissatisfaction with pay and conditions did emerge, which became central to understanding the dynamics of the channel's development.

The criticism of my interlocutor that I was asking the wrong questions was a salutary reminder that an interview is only as good as the questions that are asked. In short, although I felt the interviews were exhaustive, I have no evidence that they were, although as noted I stopped the interview process only when repetition became the norm in terms of themes. Moreover, as I began to analyze my data and write up my findings, I began to understand how an issue such as censorship, which is prominent in academic analysis of media in the PRC, is of less concern to media makers working within the system. As my discussion of Foucault and Certeau in the introduction indicated, despite the formal hierarchy of power within which media are embedded and the ubiquitous character of censorship in PRC media, paradoxically my interlocutors had every reason to suggest that regulation and censorship of PRC media are far more contested than would be inferred from the formal character of the relations of power alone.

Another potential lacuna associated with the interview process was my use of English. Apart from the interview with Sun Xupei, I conducted all the interviews in English. In my opinion, all of the interviewees had good to excellent English, which one would expect given that they were putting an English-language bulletin to air. But it was still their second language in every case except for the foreigners interviewed. The facility with which some of my interlocutors expressed themselves is evident from the verbatim transcripts, which in part are reproduced as quotations in the dissertation text. Where there appeared to be a problem with expression during an interview, accord was sought through rewording questions, asking the same question again, or asking for clarification of an answer. Despite this, I cannot rule out that my interlocutors may have expressed themselves differently had they answered in their native tongue.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> For some of the interviewees, their native spoken language was not Mandarin, but another dialect within the Chinese language family.

Finally, given the character of the research site – a state controlled newsroom in a one ruling party state – with all the implications, positive and negative, that this has for workers’ security etc., the question of confidentiality was paramount in the interviewing process. In line with IRB protocols (see below) each interviewee was informed prior to their interview that all recorded data was confidential and that precautions would be taken to keep it that way. Interviewees were also informed of their right to withdraw from participation in the interview at any time, and to withdraw my right of access to their interview. I retained copies of the interview transcripts, but I do not present them as appendices because of concerns for the privacy not only of the interviewees, but also of colleagues to whom they refer.

### ***Data Analysis***

The unit of analysis for the interviews was the statement. Initial data analysis proceeded apace with the interview process. The nature of an interview almost forced this approach, since I was able to shape ongoing and upcoming interviews to reflect what I was learning or had learned in previous conversations, keeping in mind the basic set of questions that guided the research.

Once the interviews were completed, I transcribed them and coded them inductively in an attempt to identify those key themes and topics which were of most value in understanding the news making process. To this end, I deployed NUD\*IST<sup>64</sup> qualitative research software, which simplified the process of finding themes and topics of greater or lesser concern to my interviewees. Each interview was put into NUD\*IST with the paragraph defined as the unit of analysis. Although a paragraph is not a statement, of the three options offered by NUD\*IST – line, sentence or paragraph – the

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<sup>64</sup> The NUD\*IST website is at [http://www.qsrinternational.com/products\\_previous-products\\_n6.aspx](http://www.qsrinternational.com/products_previous-products_n6.aspx).

sense in which a paragraph ideally contains a single idea was closest to the sense of a statement.

Using NUD\*IST, and echoing Creswell's (1994:167) suggestion, I organized data categorically and compared interviews with one another, and with my impressions from taking part in the news making process. Keeping in mind the diversity of the interviewees' positions within the newsroom and experience in news making, I was not surprised that my first pass through the interviews produced seventy-nine separate themes. One advantage of using NUD\*IST is that I was then able to collate those themes into broader categories of understanding as follows: attitudes to oneself, ones colleagues and the workplace; the audience; editorial values; regulation, censorship and attitudes to the Government and Party and their influence on news making; the place of CCTV-9 in global media and competition with other global broadcasters; attitudes of management and about management; the news making process; reporting; the effect of the market on media and technical aspects of broadcasting. These core themes were then woven into the discussion that I developed in the presentation of data.

Although the narrowing of categories involved a high degree of data reduction where redundancies were involved, I was also concerned to preserve nuances, divergences, discrepancies, and diversity, since the richness of CCTV-9 as a news making site was not only in finding commonalities, but just as importantly in finding the small differences that lent the newsroom and staff character and enabled them to negotiate in different ways the various pressures they were facing as news makers.

### ***Write-up***

Because the interviews were treated as an ancillary data form, which functioned to strengthen participant observation, rather than present the interviews as a separate

chapter within the dissertation, I have woven the impressions I derived from my conversations with colleagues into the broader picture of news making that I develop in the body of the dissertation. I made no attempt to read hidden motives into the interviews. I assumed my interlocutors were engaged in the communicative process as Habermas (1984) would define it in terms of truth, trust and sincerity as the preconditions of communication.

By not treating the interviews as isolated elements within the research but as elements in the dynamics of news making, findings from participant observation were strengthened, lending greater internal validity to the research. In so far as interviewees discussed topics and themes that extended beyond the newsroom to the broader contexts of news making in the PRC, they provided qualified support for my discussion of the development of a theory of news making at CCTV-9 in the context of ongoing media reform and globalization of PRC media.

## **Documentation**

### ***Data collection***

Apart from keeping my diary, as part of the participant observation I also collected on-site documents that came to my attention during the normal course of the working day. These documents ranged from scripts that related to the particular handling of a story, emails issued to staff and exchanged formally and informally between staff, directives issued to the newsroom, whether from regulatory or censorial authorities, managers, or zhubians and directors, through to staff work schedules and signs posted in the newsroom.



## *Analysis*

The unit of analysis for documents was the document. Once I began analysis, the documents I collected were separated into categories that were useful and not useful to the overall thrust of the dissertation. The kinds of documents I retained were then sorted into those in Chinese and those in English.

Chinese documents include directives, documents associated with the May 2004 relaunch, production plans developed by the reporting group and documents issued in Chinese to the newsroom, such as schedules. The first step in analyzing Chinese documents was to translate them. I did all the translations of documentation for this dissertation. I had two native Mandarin readers, both with good English,<sup>65</sup> check against the originals all the translations I used in the dissertation.

English documents included foreign expert schedules and emails issued to the foreign experts by management or circulated among Chinese and foreign staff or between foreign staff. As with the Chinese documents, I first sorted the English documents into those that were useful for understanding the news production process and those that were peripheral.

Perhaps the most difficult decision I made with respect to English documents was to decide not to quote emails that the foreign experts circulated among themselves, sometimes inadvertently, about their attitudes to working at CCTV-9, their attitudes to one another and their attitudes to their Chinese colleagues. Some of these emails were incendiary. But in the final analysis, CCTV-9 was something of a pressure cooker. As in any deadline driven working environment, people sometimes tended to say and write things that they would later come to regret. In my own case, frustration at the news

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<sup>65</sup> Both were tertiary educated. One had lived and work in the US for several years. The other was a Beijing-based certified teacher of Chinese to foreigners.

making process led me to lose my temper several times at CCTV-9, and, as one of the most experienced journalists working there, I should have known better. I do not see any point in embarrassing anybody else who happened to have worked there or is still working there, whether foreign or Chinese. So I have chosen to not cite from those emails. However, such emails cannot but have influenced my understanding of the dynamics at work at CCTV-9, and as such they cannot but have influenced my analysis. Perhaps my strongest reason for not drawing more on those emails was my sense that despite the occasional lapse, most staff at CCTV-9 seemed to enjoy their work, liked the social (if not the physical)<sup>66</sup> environment, and at least tolerated if not respected and/or liked one another.

### ***Write-up***

The documentation described above was drawn upon to reflect upon and triangulate other data. As such, when used, it was woven into the data chapters, which, apart from the survey of content, were organized more according to the research questions than according to the diverse methodologies deployed.

### **Survey of content**

As already noted, I conducted what I call a survey of content rather than a content analysis of CCTV-9 output. Babbie (2001) notes that content analysis is oriented to answering the “why” and “with what effect” in the classical question: “Who says what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect?” (p. 305). However, content analysis would seem to be also able to answer “who says what to whom,” and “how” depending on how

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<sup>66</sup> The CCTV building was rundown. Even a revamp of CCTV-9’s facilities associated with the May 2004 relaunch did not improve what seemed to be a general sense of contempt many staff had for their work place. I was at a loss to explain this, because it was at odds with what I felt was their generally positive attitude to their work and one another.

on uses the technique. My survey of content addresses the questions of who says what to whom and how, which are precisely those questions which Babbie (2001) brackets for content analysis. I also address the question why,<sup>67</sup> but not through analysis of the meaning of texts, instead focusing on how texts relate to sources.

### ***Data Collection***

The survey of content drew on two forms of data: rundowns and scripts. The rundown is the director's list of elements that go into a bulletin, of which stories are only one element (see Appendix 3, p. 487, for an example with coding). The rundown is the working 'menu' that represents the bulletin. The script contained the voiced content of a story, as well as instructions to technicians about keying in overlay that would identify story elements such as the 'slug'<sup>68</sup> and 'super' and identify any speakers within the story (see Appendix 3 for an example with coding). I collected the scripts rather than the on air versions of stories because this simplified the process of data collection, coding and analysis.

In order to get a representative sample of rundowns and scripts, I used the method recommended by Anders Hansen (1996 p. 134) of one whole week of programming followed by seven consecutive days of the week, one day per week, covering eight consecutive weeks. I used a version of this procedure either side of the May 3, 2004 relaunch, mirroring the first set of data with the second, rather than repeating the procedure. That is, I reversed the procedure for the second set of data, finishing with the

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<sup>67</sup> Depending on what Babbie (2001) means by "why", no doubt content analysis can address this question. However, as I have noted already, Cottle (Undated) cautions against an "illicit leap from a critical reading of media content to inferences and about motivations or explanations accounting for this output" (p. 45).

<sup>68</sup> The 'slug' is a single line of text summarizing the story. It is keyed as overlay to a story during the first few seconds of the visual element, following the anchor's lead in. The 'super' is one or two words of text super-imposed at the bottom of a 'shoulder box' that appears to the top right of the anchor (from the viewer's point of view) during the anchor's introduction of the story. The 'shoulder box' is a box that contains a still taken from the story's visuals and designed to summarize the story

seven consecutive days of data. This made the distribution of dates equidistant from the middle point, May 3, 2004, the relaunch date. The dates for which I collected data were Feb 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 16, 24, March 3, 11, 19, 27 and June 9, 17, 25, July 3, 11, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, August 1, 2, 3. I started with February 1 because I wanted the data to be inside the one year of keeping a diary, which also began on February 1. In addition, I wanted to distance as far as possible the data sample from the relaunch date, since I wanted to allow as much as possible for the possibility that in the immediate run up to and aftermath of the relaunch, the newsroom would be at its least representative in terms of the normal rhythms of news making.

I collected rundowns for two bulletins, 1200 and 2400, and coded scripts for one bulletin, 1200. The choice of rundowns for two bulletins was to test whether the average bulletin changed during the day, as the news cycle moved its focus from China, reflected in the 2400 bulletin, to the wider world, reflected in the 1200 bulletin, which one might hypothesize would include a greater proportion of stories from daytime in Africa, Europe and the Americas when it was overnight and early morning in the PRC.

I coded the rundowns for both sets of bulletins, since any shift in focus due to the changing news cycle in any twenty-four hour period would be evident from the source of the news, which was an element manifest in the rundown (see Appendix 3, p. 488). To test for changes pre- and post-relaunch I coded the scripts of the 1200 bulletin (see Appendix 3, p. 489 for an example). Twenty-eight rundowns were collected for coding: fourteen for the 1200 bulletin and fourteen for the 2400 bulletin. Five hundred and nineteen scripts were collected from the 1200 bulletin pre- and post-relaunch.

A problem emerged at this point with respect to comparing the scripts pre- and post-relaunch. Management added to the post-relaunch 1200 bulletin a short block of sporting news prepared by the sports department. That block would go into the bulletin

regardless of the merits of the stories. Although the segment only included two to three short stories each bulletin, preliminary analysis suggested that the inclusion of these sporting stories into the coded sample would skew several of the coding categories, in particular place, when comparison was made with the pre-relaunch 1200 bulletin, which did not have any special segments. The reason was that sports stories often involved multiple places, since each player in any game or tournament was named and their country of origin given.

To control for this problem, I removed from the coded sample all stories for which the sports department was responsible, leaving in the bulletin only stories the zhubian considered of merit. Pre-relaunch, this removed two stories from the 1200 bulletin population, reducing the sample from 242 to 240 scripts, a loss of less than one percent. Post-relaunch, thirty-four stories were removed from the 1200 bulletin, reducing the sample from 268 to 234 or by thirteen percent (Table 1).

Table 1: Stories collected and used for comparison (source: CCTV-9)

1200 Bulletin	Pre-relaunch	Post-relaunch	Total
Sport included	242	268	510
Sport excluded	240	234	474

Perhaps thirteen percent was high. However, I reasoned that as only one source category (sport) was affected while rendering possible the comparison I wished to make of the 1200 bulletins pre- and post-relaunch in terms of all other categories, the loss of precision<sup>69</sup> in terms of the aggregate of elements that constituted a bulletin seemed to be

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<sup>69</sup> By precision, I am adapting Babbie's (2001) definition that it "concerns the fineness of distinctions made between the attributes that compose a variable" (p. 140) treating the bulletin as a variable and the elements that make it up as attributes.

an acceptable trade-off. Nevertheless in the presentation of the results of the survey of content in Chapter 11 the reader should keep in mind that the data have been manipulated for the sake of comparison and that the audience saw a slightly different bulletin than the statistics represent.

That difference can be represented by comparing bulletins with and without inclusion of those stories for which the sports department was responsible. This comparison is shown in Table 3, a comparative breakdown of the bulletins according to their major components, a) news elements and b) filler, which are defined in Table 2. The ratios remain approximately the same, regardless of whether stories for which the sports department were responsible are included since filler associated with sport has also been excluded. The only noticeable difference is the loss of the thirty-four sports stories post-relaunch.

Table 3 also contains examples of the use of duration, rather than discrete counts. For all analysis of content where the variable could be measured by duration, I have used duration for analysis, since duration better reflects the overall distribution of story types and bulletin elements within a bulletin. For the sake of consistency all statistics relating to the bulletins have been generated from the sample that excluded stories generated by the sports department. Three different N values were used in the analysis where appropriate:  $N = 742$  (Table 3, #5, #6 & #7);  $N(\text{stories}) = 474$  (Table 3, #5) and  $N(\text{filler}) = 260$  (Table 3, #7).

Table 2: Definitions of story types and bulletin elements

Story type or element	Definition
Copy story	No video: Anchor on screen reading from a script produced by a writer or foreign expert.
Take story	Includes video or graphics: Written by writers or foreign experts. Entire story read by anchor, with video or graphic overlay following the introduction.
Story (writer or reporter)	Include video: Produced by staff from source material (writer story) or as self cover (reporter story). Following anchor's introduction, story narrated by other person, usually the writer or reporter, but in the case of writers who had not passed the in-house 'voice over' test required for staff who narrated stories, narrated by a third person, often a foreign expert, who would sign-off on the story, saying e.g. "John Jirik, CCTV", giving the impression they were responsible for the story, when they had no role in its production. <sup>70</sup>
2-way	An exchange between the anchor and a person either in the studio, or off-site. <sup>71</sup>
Filler	All other elements of a bulletin: opening and closing credits; headlines, promotional spots; anchor's sign off; weather (for a complete discussion of filler, see Chapter 11: Content, p. 406).

<sup>70</sup> This kind of practice is typical (and not only in the PRC) of television news production, which is concerned to hide the production process behind the façade of authorship. Veteran war correspondent Peter Arnett pointed to this practice when he stated during the furor over the story for which CNN sacked him, the Tailwind incident which involved the alleged use of nerve gas by US special forces against defectors in Laos during the Vietnam War: "I contributed not one comma .... They gave me the list [of questions]. I asked [them]. The producers took the tape and I was gone. I was the face" (CJR, 1988). From my experience at NBC, where, for example, neither of the broadcaster's Moscow-based correspondents covering the USSR during its collapse spoke Russian, Arnett's description of his role (as on air narrator) in the story was one of the most honest statements I have ever read about news making. Unsurprisingly, after CNN retracted the story when its central premise remained unproven, Arnett was made the scapegoat for an industry which is deep in denial. Against this, some news makers have begun in recent years to acknowledge the production process. Reuters, for example, has begun to list a range of inputs into a story. On a typical example, 'Dalai Lama calls for end to violence in Tibet' (dateline: Beijing, March 18, 2008) by Chris Buckley and Lindsay Beck, Reuters acknowledged "Additional reporting by Benjamin Kang Lim and Guo Shipeng in Beijing, Jonathan Allen in Dharamsala, Marine Hass in Brussels, Paul Eckert in Washington and Francois Murphy in Paris; writing by John Chalmers; editing by Andrew Roche" (Buckley & Beck, 2008). The industry needs much more of this.

<sup>71</sup> Strictly speaking, in television jargon a '2-way' happens when the anchor in the studio speaks by telephone or video link with someone off site. For the sake of simplifying my categories, I have included in the definition of 2-way in-studio interviews with guests.

Table 3: 1200 Bulletin comparison of news elements & filler

#		Pre-relaunch				Post-relaunch			
	Bulletin Elements	No.	%	Duration (hh:mm:ss)	%	No.	%	Duration (hh:mm:ss)	%
	<b>Sport included</b>								
1	Stories	242	63.4	5:11:15	74.6	268	64.1	5:17:17	74.9
2	2-ways	4	1.0	0:12:27	3.0	4	1.0	0:09:41	2.3
3	Filler	136	35.6	1:33:43	22.5	146	34.9	1:36:22	22.8
4	Total	382	100.0	6:57:25	100.0	418	100.0	7:03:20	100.0
	<b>Sport excluded</b>								
5	Stories	240	63.2	5:08:37	74.4	234	64.6	4:40:48	75.0
6	2-ways	4	1.1	0:12:27	3.0	4	1.1	0:09:41	2.6
7	Filler	136	35.8	1:33:43	22.6	124	34.3	1:23:46	22.4
8	Total	380	100.0	6:54:47	100.0	362	100.0	6:14:15	100.0

### ***Data Analysis***

For the survey of content, two units of analysis were used. The first unit of analysis was the bulletin, represented by the rundowns. The second unit of analysis was the story, represented by the scripts. Table 4 shows the two units of analysis, the variables associated with the coding, the level of measurement associated with each variable and the depth or specificity of each variable as a function of content as manifest (specificity) or latent (depth), which I used to decide whether to test for inter-coder reliability (see below)

As Babbie (2001) notes, latent content refers to the “underlying meaning” (p. 310) of texts whereas manifest content is the “visible, surface content” (p. 310). This difference is that associated with the difference between denotation (manifest content) and connotation (latent content) in structural linguistics (Barthes, 1972; Saussure, 1986). I was primarily concerned only with the visible, surface content, since this was the reality



(materiality) of the news and represented visible evidence of the choices news makers made from the range of available inputs.

Content analysis will often treat the story as the unit of analysis, since the story is designed to appear as a seamless whole to the viewer. Although I take the story as the unit of analysis for scripts, what I focus on in analyzing the bulletin in terms of its

Table 4: Units of analysis, variables, measurement & depth

Unit of Analysis	Variable	Measurement	Depth or Specificity
Rundown	Date (of bulletin)	Nominal	Manifest
	Time (1200 / 2400)	Nominal	Manifest
	Length (of bulletin)	Ordinal	Manifest
	a. Duration anchor on screen & speaking	Ordinal	Manifest
	b. Duration anchor not on screen but speaking	Ordinal	Manifest
	c. Duration story not voiced by anchor	Ordinal	Manifest
	Story duration (index of a., b., and c.)	Ordinal	Manifest
	Run (first / repeat)	Nominal	Manifest
	Department (responsible for story)	Nominal	Manifest
	Source (source material of story)	Nominal	Manifest
	Type (of story or bulletin element)	Nominal	Manifest
Story	Topic	Nominal	Latent
	Referred to	Nominal	Latent (de-facto)
	Speaks	Nominal	Latent (de-facto)
	Place	Nominal	Manifest
	Orientation	Nominal	Manifest

constituent elements in relationship to the story is what the bulletin and the story are designed to hide from the viewer, their constructed character and the elements from which they are cobbled together.

Against the news as the natural (the only possible, the true) representation of an objective reality, my use of content is designed to show news as the social construction of

reality by situated agents embedded in the journalistic field who make strategic and tactical choices about each building block of the stories and bulletin as they put them together. In short, I am concerned with words, pictures, sounds and graphics as markers that distinguish the different building blocks of the news, not as markers that point to the seamless meaning often assumed in the narrativization of reality.

All the elements of the rundown were manifest content, since the rundown functioned as a mapping of the bulletin. These elements were not tested for inter-coder reliability, since coding the rundown was an act of transcription. Illustration 16 (Appendix 3, p. 488) provides an example of that act. With respect to scripts, strictly speaking only the variable topic involved choice in meaning. However, I also treated referred to and who speaks as de-facto latent content, given the complexity of the categories derived from inductive coding (see below). In testing for inter-coder reliability on the variables referred to and who speaks, I was checking the degree of congruence in the meanings implied by the distribution and combination of the original fifty-nine variables into ten new variables that in effect were indexes constructed from the original variables. Therefore inter-coder reliability was not checking what the variables meant, but whether the indexes I had constructed were valid.

The coding sheets for both the rundowns and the stories and definitions of the variables in terms of attributes which were used to make coding categories exhaustive and mutually exclusive are provided in Appendix 2.

The definitions of the rundown elements are given in Table 4. The definitions of the categories coded from the scripts were as follows:

### **Topic**

Topic referred to the overall meaning of the story, its point. I derived the categories for topic from an initial inductive coding of the 474 scripts in the 1200

bulletin, pre- and post-relaunch. Reading through the scripts, I listed what appeared to me to be a topic that I had not already encountered. The list produced twenty-three categories (see Table 5). I then collapsed these categories into nine for the purpose of developing a manageable and testable coding schema and with an eye to what as a former news producer seemed to me to be an intuitively comprehensive set of mutually exclusive categories (Table 5).<sup>72</sup> Collapsing the original categories also involved the splitting of several of the original categories (Development, Environment, Judicial and Weather) and reallocating stories preliminarily coded to those categories to the new categories. An additional category ‘Other’ was included in the new categories to ensure that the test of inter-coder reliability (see below, p. 189) was exhaustive. The Topic coding sheet and definitions of the attributes of the variables are provided in Appendix 2 (p. 481).

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<sup>72</sup> Of some interest to me was the emergence of ‘security’ as a category of topic that refused to be reduced to politics. Clearly so-called terrorism and the acts of violence associated with it and concerns of states with this situation have taken on a life of their own, at least in media.

Table 5: Old & new categories for coding Topic

NEW	OLD
CRIME	CRIME
CULTURE	CULTURE
	OLYMPICS
	SPORT
	DEVELOPMENT
	ENVIRONMENT
DISASTER	DISASTER
	DISEASE
	WEATHER
ECONOMICS	BUSINESS
	DEVELOPMENT
	ECONOMICS
	GLOBALIZATION
HISTORY	ANNIVERSARY
	ENVIRONMENT
NATURE & SCIENCE	SCIENCE
	ENVIRONMENT
	WEATHER
POLITICS	FOREIGN POLICY
	GOVERNANCE
	POLICY
	POLITICS
SECURITY	CONFLICT
	JUDICIAL
	SECURITY
	TERRORISM
SOCIETY	SOCIAL
	DEVELOPMENT
OTHER	

Following the test of inter-coder reliability (see p. 189), I collapsed politics and economics into political economy in recognition of the deep inter-penetration of the two in the PRC.<sup>73</sup> I also collapsed crime and disaster into a single category for the sake of

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<sup>73</sup> See p. 424 for a footnote discussing what was lost in collapsing these two variables.

comparison, as the original inductive coding used to derive the categories indicated too few crime stories to warrant a separate category. Finally, the category ‘other’ was dispensed with, since it was only introduced to ensure that the inter-coder reliability test was exhaustive. The resulting categories that I used for topic were: crime & disaster, culture, history, nature & science, political economy, security and society.

### **Referred to & who speaks**

For the categories of person(s) referred to and who speaks, I used the same variables and sets of attributes. Again, using the original population of 474 1200 News bulletin scripts, I coded inductively for what appeared to me to be a type of person or institution (understood as an agglomeration of persons) that had not been previously encountered. The original coding produced fifty-nine variables (see Appendix 2, p. 482), which I collapsed and redistributed into the following ten:

- Business
- Expert
- International Organization or NGO
- Media
- Military
- Official
- Opposition
- Victim
- Worker
- Other

The attributes used to define the variables as exhaustive and mutually exclusive were included in the coding sheet, of which a copy is provided in Appendix 2 (p. 482). In the test of inter-coder reliability and in the coding of the sample (the population of 1200

CCTV News scripts: N = 474), each unique person and/or institution was counted once per story, no matter how many times they occurred in the story. The rationale for so doing was that in a given story multiple references to unique person and/or institution could logically only be the same person.

### **Place**

In coding place in the scripts, rather than code for where a story took place, in order to code place as manifest content I coded for place(s) in the news. The difference can be illustrated with reference to the following story ('Flu Controllable', Illustration 2).

<p>[Super] FLU CONTROLLABLE [Slug] Chinese govt. confident of bird flu controls [Lead in] Hello, and welcome to CCTV News. I'm Xin Hui, in Beijing. Chinese President Hu Jintao, who is in Cairo on a state visit, has stated his government's confidence in authorities' ability to control bird flu. He made the remarks while meeting media on Saturday in Cairo. (TAKE GRAPHICS) Hu Jintao says the government has taken a series of measures to control the bird flu in China. He stressed the government has the capability to solve the problem and prevent transfer from animals to persons. He promised that the government will to do its utmost to protect people's health. (OUT)</p>
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Illustration 2: Script for 'Flu Controllable,' aired February 1, 2004

Intuitively, this story appears to 'take place' in Cairo, since it refers to President Hu Jintao's remarks, which were made in the Egyptian capital. However, on reflection did the story 'take place' there? What part of 'Flu controllable' happened where? It was a 'take' story, which meant it was not reported from Cairo, but written in the CCTV-9 newsroom. In addition, this particular story had no moving video, only a still picture of a meeting of President Hu, which was not the meeting with journalists referred to in the script, but apparently a meeting with Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, although that can only be inferred from the still picture in the context of the story. So the shoulder box shows a meeting in one place while the script refers to a different meeting in another

place. In addition, the script also refers to measures the government in the PRC has taken to control bird flu in the PRC. So, where does this story take place: Cairo, the PRC, somewhere else? And how should it be coded?

However the question of ‘place’ in ‘Flu controllable,’ only presents a problem if the researcher is dealing with the latent content of the story and attempting to answer where the story, understood as a seamless whole, occurred. My emphasis on manifest content and its importance for understanding the constructed character of news allowed me to sidestep the problems associated with this approach. I coded for the markers of place rather than for the meaning of the markers. In short, for place I coded the above script as: a) Cairo and b) PRC since Cairo and China were the markers of place mentioned in the story.

From place, regardless of type (rural, village, county, town, city, province (state), country), I was able to build an index of countries and regions in the news. In coding for place, markers of place were transcribed directly from scripts onto the Excel spreadsheet used for analysis (see Appendix 2, (p. 486) for a screenshot of the spreadsheet). The indices of place used in analysis in Chapter 11: Content – province (municipality), country and region – were derived from manipulation of the data.

### **Orientation**

The category of orientation was derived from place and as such was manifest content. Orientation was coded as a) domestic, b) foreign policy or c) foreign in line with Chang & Chen’s (1998) recognition that PRC news presents a significantly different perspective on events and issues depending on orientation. I also included Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan as separate categories of orientation, given the special status of Hong Kong and Macao as Special Administrative Regions (SARs) within the PRC under the ‘one country, two systems’ formula and the ambiguity of Taiwan’s de-facto status as an

entity separate from the PRC, but not a foreign country. The categories for orientation were defined as follows:

1. Domestic (Only places inside the PRC, but not Hong Kong and/or Macao, were mentioned in the script. Alternately, no places at all were mentioned in the script, which defaulted to Beijing, since such stories were invariably about governance in the PRC.)
2. Foreign Policy (At least one Domestic place or Hong Kong or Macao and one place that was neither the PRC nor in the PRC (including Hong Kong or Macao), nor Taiwan or in Taiwan were mentioned in the same script. In the example of coding, in ‘Muslim Festival’ (Appendix 3, p. 489) Orientation was coded Foreign Policy because at least Saudi Arabia and China (PRC) were mentioned)
3. Foreign (no PRC (including Hong Kong or Macao) nor Taiwan place was mentioned in the script. But at least one other place was mentioned.)
4. Taiwan (Any mention of a Taiwan place, regardless of any other entity mentioned was coded as Taiwan.)
5. Hong Kong and/or Macao (Only mentions of Hong Kong and/or Macao were made in the script.)

### ***Test for inter-coder reliability***

Two coders independently blind coded a five percent stratified random sample of the story types – copy, take, (writer or reporter) story – of the 1200 scripts, pre- and post-relaunch, coding for a) topic, b) referred to and c) who speaks. The operationalization of the three categories coded to ensure comprehensiveness and mutual exclusivity is outlined in Appendix 2 (topic – p. 481; referred to & who speaks – p. 482). The fourth story type, 2-way, was not included in the test of inter-coder reliability, as I did not have



transcripts for this story type. I chose a stratified random sample rather than a random sample in order to get a representative sample of news from a) pre- and post-relaunch bulletins and b) from the three story types for which I had scripts: copy, take and (writer or reporter) story.

Using the story as the unity of analysis, Table 6 shows the number of scripts allocated to each story type in the stratified random sample. The scripts used for the inter-coder reliability test are provided in Appendix 4 (p. 490).

Table 6: Number of stories of each type used in random stratified sample

	Pre-relaunch			Post-relaunch		
Story Type	No.	5% Sample	Sample	No.	5% Sample	Sample
Copy	26	1.3	1	21	1.1	1
Take	108	5.4	6	114	5.8	6
Story	106	5.3	5	99	5.0	5
Total	240	12.0	12	234	11.9	12

The test of inter-coder reliability used was that described in Holsti (1969), which defines reliability in terms of “the ratio of coding agreements to the total number of coding decisions” ( p. 140), using the formula  $\text{Inter-coder Reliability} = 2M/(N1+N2)$ , where M is “the number of coding decisions on which the two judges are in agreement, and N1 and N2 refer to the number of coding decisions made by judges 1 and 2, respectively” ( p. 140). Although this test has been criticized for not accounting for chance, as Holsti (1969 p. 140) notes agreement by chance alone should decrease as the number of categories increases. Given that the two coders were working with ten categories for all three tests (topic, referred to and who speaks), the possibility of agreement by chance was minimal. The test and its results are provided in Appendix 5, (p. 548). Inter-coder reliability was as follows:

- Topic = 0.75

- Referred to = 0.79
- Who speaks = 0.72

### ***Write-up***

The survey of content has been presented as Chapter 11. I have presented the survey of content as a discrete chapter and the final data chapter, because output provides evidence of the news making process discussed in preceding chapters and opens the way to the concluding chapter, which discusses how content and production are related.

### ***Drawbacks to the method of surveying content***

The key potential criticism I feel I should answer about the way I have treated content is that I have ignored the audiovisual elements of the stories. In other words I ignored the television component of the content, since this is what one sees and hears on screen, in favor of analyzing the form (the different elements that go into a news bulletin) that content took. However, in so far as I am seeking to explain why what appears on air does so, I believe that by focusing on form rather than content I have correctly oriented myself towards identifying the range of forces at work that shape content. I am not concerned to understand what the audience might have made of what they saw, which is designed to appear as a seamless representation that hides the character of its construction. Rather, I am concerned to show how the surface of television betrays what it attempts to hide.

### **ACCESS**

There were two levels of access in this study: formal and informal. CCTV-9 management gave me permission to do this research, and the permission was included in the original IRB authorization (see below) for this study. However, formal access was only the first step in gaining the confidence of my colleagues in the newsroom and

getting them to open up to me about the news making process. Although I had worked at CCTV in the past, as already noted I was not able to establish good relations with all of my colleagues. As a result, as I have already acknowledged, my interview sample was biased towards people with whom I had good relations. I have attempted to account for this bias in my analysis and have relied on triangulation to mitigate its effects as much as possible. In addition, I cannot discount that my observation of my colleagues' work was not biased in the conclusions I drew depending on the quality of the relationship with the person with whom I was inter-acting. Again, triangulation provided the best defense against bias in observation developing into bias in general.

#### **IRB & THE ISSUE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Because this study involved human subjects, I required IRB approval to go ahead. Permission to do the study was received from CCTV. This permission was included with the original IRB proposal, which also included the required consent forms (see Appendix 6). Because of the sensitive character of the interview data I was dealing with and because of my concern not to leave any kind of paper trail linking my work to my interlocutors, IRB granted waiver of informed consent for observation and waiver of documentation of consent for interviews.

Before each interview, the interviewee was given the consent forms in English and Chinese. In the filing data for the interviews, each interviewee's name was assigned a randomly generated three digit number, which was the only identifying mark printed on the cassette used to tape the interview. The number was also used to identify the transcripts, which ensured that the transcripts were anonymous. Nobody but I had access to the number key to the names, which I kept in an encrypted file.

IRB consent to the research protocol was obtained for the period May 30, 2003 to May 30, 2004. The original consent was extended three times, each time for one year. The protocol was closed on April 22, 2007.

In undertaking this research, my paramount concern was for the people at CCTV-9 with whom I was working. Given the unpredictable character of the future of media reform in the PRC, I have taken a range of precautions to protect my former colleagues. Nobody is identified by name in this research, unless their name was already part of the public record. However, even when a person was part of the public record, I have only named them with respect to that record. At all other times, they appear in this dissertation without name. In addition, I have also made anonymous certain persons whose names are on the public record. I did so in order to not draw attention to a person, when it was not the person that was the focus of my analysis, but their actions in the situation or context with which their name was associated.

One final caveat with respect to participant observation and the issue of human subjects is the question of secrecy. Should a researcher identify themselves as such? The literature (Babbie, 2001, pp. 278-279; Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999, pp. 372-373) gives a range of answers as to the question of researcher anonymity, arguing in some cases that deception can be justified if it “will not be harmful to the participants in the research” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 90), while others maintain “that there is never any justification for covert observation” (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999, pp. 272-373) and that it is both “wrong and unnecessary” (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999, p. 373).

I conducted all my research openly at CCTV, not attempting to conceal anything, and my colleagues would occasionally joke that I was a spy as they watched me gathering data. Whenever my colleagues asked me what I was doing during data

collection, I was open and honest in answering. When my colleagues asked about my progress, I informed them of the state of my research, including data collected, analysis and findings.

## **PROBLEMS WITH THE RESEARCH**

### **Language**

Although I was working in an English-language newsroom, and the editorial and managerial staff all spoke English, much of the newsroom talk was in Chinese. Although I speak some Chinese, my level was not sufficient to follow natural Chinese banter and conversations between Chinese or to conduct more than a minimum of the research in Chinese. I took a twelve-week immersion course in Mandarin on my arrival in Beijing. In addition, I retained a private tutor following the end of the immersion course. During the data gathering process, I was able to conduct simple conversations in Chinese. However my level of listening comprehension was not to the point that I could clearly understand what e.g. television and radio were saying, although if I was party to a conversation, I was usually able to understand what was going on, and make myself understood. By the time I was doing the analysis and write-up my reading was to the point where (as noted, see p. 174) I was able to do all the translations for the materials I used in the dissertation.

However, I must acknowledge that language remained a barrier that has affected the quality of the observations. In particular, the meetings of the committee to plan the relaunch (see p. 214) were conducted in Chinese, and I simply did not understand much of what was being said. Although I made a point of speaking to other committee members after the meetings, I believe my access to the data available at those meetings was severely compromised.

## **Guanxi**

I have already discussed the issue of ‘guanxi’ and its implications for who opened up to me, whether in interviews, or in the general collegiality of the news making process. As a result, I must acknowledge that the potential for bias exists in my interviews and observation and as a result in my analysis.

## **Personal attitude to news making**

I must acknowledge a personal ambivalence about broadcast news, which affected how I saw CCTV-9. My first encounter with broadcast news making was in 1988, when I briefly worked at the US network CBS in Moscow as an assistant to the office manager during the Reagan-Gorbachev summit of May 1988. Later, between 1990 and 1992, I worked with the US network NBC, again in Moscow. Dissatisfaction with the stereotypes and superficiality that characterized CBS’s and NBC’s coverage of the Soviet Union and Russia led me to abandon broadcasting in favor of agency work with Reuters, beginning in 1992, in the hope that removing one layer of the production process would bring me closer to ‘the story’ since Reuters supplied much of what NBC put to air.<sup>74</sup> In the long run, I found Reuters hardly less one-dimensional, although I loved the process (and still do) at both broadcasters and agency of “putting reality together” as Schlesinger (1987) has described it.

My work at CCTV-9 was a return to broadcasting. In the meantime, I had come to the conclusion that broadcast news is a contradiction in terms. To my mind, news makers have not yet learned how to use television to make news, except in the most superficial of ways. To my mind, in its current form the anchor and the journalist in television have

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<sup>74</sup> NBC’s coverage of the coup attempt against Gorbachev in August 1991 was a case in point. So disappointed was I by the manner in which NBC had covered the coup that I joined two friends, both of them experienced former Soviet journalists, and we edited a book, available at <http://www.geocities.com/jjirik/>, which attempted to tell a different story about the coup attempt, one in which the people in Moscow at the time might have actually recognized themselves and their roles.

become obstacles that stand between the audience and the story. However, while I believe that journalists – as people who have something to say about the world – could have an important role to play in television news (although most seem to play or are forced to play that role badly), what I dislike most about broadcasting and see no place for is the anchor, and the manner in which the role has come to dominate the news to the exclusion of the story.

My antipathy to the role of the anchor is evident in the work that follows. I must acknowledge this and allow my readers to decide how much of an impact it had on the story that I tell.

## **DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

The methodological challenge for doing the research associated with this dissertation was finding a workable balance between deployable methods and necessary lacunae in a manner that would produce defensible data. Triangulation was probably the single most important methodological component of this research, since each of the methods deployed by themselves had deficiencies. In addition, my inability to operate in fluent Chinese was a further deficiency that required triangulation to deliver defensible results. Nevertheless the hope is that each of the strengths of the different methods has gone some way to mitigating the weaknesses of each of the others.

Each of the four methods deployed – participant observation, interviews, analysis of documentation and the survey of content – added something to the overall picture I present below. But throughout the presentation, analysis and write-up of the data, I hope I have remained tentative where appropriate and avoided the problem of unjustified inference. I am confident that I have grounded my analysis in the data, and I am confident that my findings are valid. But I am also acutely aware of the responsibility that has come

with this research, since I was able to isolate a period within the development of CCTV-9 that cannot be repeated. As a result, the research itself cannot be repeated. As a case study, this dissertation is unique. As an historical document, this dissertation only has value if I have succeeded in finding that balance I outlined above. Whether I have depends on whether what follows is a just account of my time at CCTV-9.



## Chapter 7: The relaunch

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the changes associated with the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International on May 3rd, 2004 at 0400 Beijing time, when the channel formally switched from being “Your Window on China” to being “Your Window on China and the World.” According to CCTV-9 management, the order for the transformation came from within the highest level of the Party, the Standing Committee of the Politburo: “[The] top ideological boss, Li Changchun, made it very clear that CCTV should improve, CCTV International should in the two ways: to be more timely in news coverage, and also on the feature programming, to focus on economy and tourists” (interview with senior management).<sup>75</sup>

The aspirations of the Party, SARFT and channel management were lofty, a complete overhaul that would provide another competitor in the rapidly expanding world of global English-language news services (including BBC-WS, CNN-I, Al-Jazeera International, Russia Today, France 24, and Iran Press TV). Moreover, a great deal of change of a kind did take place within the channel. New programs were launched and other programs dropped from the line up. Elements of the news editorial system were partially restructured. Personnel were shuffled. The channel was provided with a new news studio. The general news editorial and production room was moved from the 8th to the 2nd floor and re-equipped in a renovated space. The offices of sections remaining or

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<sup>75</sup> I have reproduced the spoken English of my interlocutors as they used it. No attempt has been made to rewrite quotes. My reason for so doing was to show the level of command of English at CCTV-9, which in my opinion was very high.

newly installed on the 8th floor of CCTV's Beijing headquarter were renovated.<sup>76</sup> The on-air graphics, including the virtual sets, were revamped.

However, most of the programming was retained from the previous lineup despite the changes to studios, backdrops and on-air graphics. Moreover, changes to the editorial structure failed to achieve the goals set during planning of the relaunch. In particular an attempt to restructure the editorial system and institute an assignment desk at the heart of the news making system failed. In addition, most of the channel's personnel remained in their previous positions, doing the same work. As a result, the outcomes of the relaunch were mixed. In some respects major changes took place. In other respects, little changed, even in some cases where more change was expected.

In this chapter I analyze the process, successes and failures of the relaunch. Although I discuss non-news programming at length here, I include it because the relaunch was meant to inaugurate CCTV-9 as a news and news-oriented channel, with a shift away from 'soft' programming like the arts. However, it did not, although management claimed that after May 3, 2004 the channel had made substantial headway in acquiring the "basic qualities of an international news channel." What did change was the discursive construction of what CCTV-9 should be, allowing management the above claim, while barely adjusting its output (i.e. what the audience saw, which I deal with extensively in Chapter 11).

In terms of the theoretical schema outlined in the introduction and discussed in Chapter 5, the process of the relaunch provided a unique opportunity to analyze the negotiation of power and the manner in which the journalistic field in which CCTV-9 was embedded was shaped not only by the political institutions that enabled and

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<sup>76</sup> Features was located in offices that CCTV rented in a building adjacent to CCTV. Their offices were not renovated.

constrained it from above, but also by the agency of journalists and media managers, embedded in habitus characterized as much by the arts of resistance as by a disposition to obey. Against any assumption that media are relatively helpless to determine the trajectory of their development, an analysis of the May 2004 relaunch at CCTV-9 paints a picture of entrenched interests, which resisted external attempts to impose change.

The chapter begins with a comparison of programming pre- and post-relaunch. It then looks at the planning process of the relaunch, including internal negotiation and plans for partnership with external institutions such as *Xinhua* and *China Radio International*. As the planning process proceeded I analyze the adjustments management made to the original blueprint for the relaunch and the challenge for editorial that the shift to a rolling news channel entailed. Finally, I look at the manner in which the relaunch impacted on editorial control. As the focus of this dissertation is the news system at CCTV-9, this chapter is the only one that deals at length with non-news programming. I deal with news content in Chapter 11.

The research question addressed in this chapter was:

- How do media institutions such as CCTV negotiate their overall relationship with the Party and government?

From this question, two intermediate questions followed, leading to a number of specific questions:

- What are CCTV-9 and CCTV International?
  - What programming characterized the channel pre- and post-relaunch?
  - What was the relationship between the news and feature programming at CCTV-9?

- How did CCTV-9 negotiate the demand to relaunch CCTV-9 as CCTV International?
  - What demands for change were put on the channel?
  - How did management negotiate these demands?
  - What were the guidelines for the relaunch?
  - What was the planning process for the relaunch?
  - What were the external constraints on the relaunch?
  - What editorial changes were envisaged with the relaunch?
  - What was the outcome of the relaunch in terms of changes internal to the channel
  - What was the outcome of the relaunch in terms of change visible to the audience?
  - To what degree and why did the planning process depart (if at all) from the guidelines during the planning process?

#### **THE PROGRAMMING PRE- AND POST-RELAUNCH**

I begin this analysis with programming, i.e. the outcome of the production process. Other starting points are possible – an analysis of management, content, etc. However, in so far as television is a product made for consumption, what is consumed, programming, is an appropriate starting point for an analysis of the relaunch. As this dissertation deals only contingently with the audience, I do not address the argument that Dallas Smythe (1977) raised within political economy that the audience rather than programming is better understood as the product of television (for a discussion of the argument, see Mosco (1996)). Rather, as I show below (see e.g. p. 209 & p. 212), the

audience occupied an ambivalent position at CCTV-9, utilized primarily in the discursive strategies management and program makers deployed to justify decisions.

Schedules are an indicator of programming. Table 7 (p. 204) shows the weekly 24-hour schedule for CCTV-9 pre-relaunch. Table 8 (p. 205) shows the weekly 24-hour schedule for CCTV International post-relaunch. Both tables have been shaded to show the four six-hour blocks of programming the channel used both pre- and post-relaunch (for discussion of the programming blocks, see p. 306). Table 9 (p. 206) shows which programs belonged to which production sections. CCTV-9 has two major production sections: News & Current Affairs and Features. Within news, the general news section, which was responsible for CCTV News and World Wide Watch, was separate from the specialist news and current affairs sections, which were produced by teams associated with particular programs (see Figure 2, p. 208).

Although I do not intend to discuss in later chapters the content of the programming apart from that provided by the general news section and reporting group, Appendix 7 provides a brief description of each program, pre- and post-relaunch, taken from promotional materials produced by the channel.<sup>77</sup>

Figure 1 (p. 207) shows the schedules (Table 7 & Table 8) broken down into hours of on-air content per week associated with each production section. Combined, they were responsible for 168 hours (7x24) of weekly programming. By ‘responsible’ I do not mean produced, since production implies the making of programming. CCTV-9 relied heavily on repeat programming to fill the daily 24-hour cycle (for more on the use of repeat stories, see p. 319 & p. 406). I reserve the term ‘produce’ for programming made by the responsible department. Prior to the relaunch News & Current Affairs

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<sup>77</sup> I chose to use the channel’s own words to describe its programs rather than mine, as I paid little attention to programming apart from general news and within Current Affairs, World Insight, which I was invited to take a special interest in (see p.x)

programming constituted 99 hours (59%) of the weekly programming, with Features taking up 62 hours (37%). The two production houses were responsible for seven hours (4%).<sup>78</sup>

After the relaunch, News & Current Affairs occupied 110.5 hours (66%) of the weekly programming. That taken up by Features fell from 62 hours to 53 hours, a 15% decrease. Although Table 9 and Figure 1 point to the degree of similarity in programming before and after the relaunch, Figure 1 does indicate a 12% increase in the hours of News & Current Affairs.

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<sup>78</sup> Although Shanghai TV is a broadcaster, it was also a 'supplier' to CCTV. Therefore, I have treated it as a production house for the sake of simplifying tables and comparisons.

Table 7: Schedule of CCTV-9 before May 2004 relaunch

	Monday – Friday	Saturday *	Sunday *
04:00	News Asia		
04:15	Sports Scene		
04:30	Centre Stage		
05:00	CCTV News		
05:30	Nature & Science	World Insight	China Today
05:55	Chinese Civilization		
06:00	Biz China		Financial Review
06:30	Around China		
07:00	News Asia		
07:15	Learn to Speak Chinese		
07:30	Dialogue		
08:00	CCTV News		
08:30	Documentary		
09:00	Culture Express		
09:30	Dialogue (Mon.) Travelogue (Tue., Thu.) Rediscovering China (Wen. Fri.)	Travelogue	China This Week
10:00	CCTV News		
10:30	Centre Stage		
11:00	Biz China	Financial Review	Business Guide
11:30	Nature & Science	World Insight	China Today
11:55	Chinese Civilization		
12:00	CCTV News		
12:30	Around China		
13:00	CCTV News		
13:30	Dialogue		
14:00	Biz China	Financial Review	Business Guide
14:30	Documentary		
15:00	CCTV News		
15:30	Dialogue (Mon.) Travelogue (Tue., Thu.) Rediscovering China (Wed., Fri.)	Travelogue	China This Week
16:00	Culture Express		
16:30	Centre Stage		
17:00	CCTV News		
17:30	Nature & Science	World Insight	China Today
17:55	Chinese Civilization		
18:00	Shanghai Today		
18:15	Learn to Speak Chinese		
18:30	Around China		
19:00	World Wide Watch		
19:30	Dialogue		
20:00	Culture Express		
20:30	Documentary		
21:00	Biz China	Financial Review	Business Guide
21:30	Dialogue (Mon.) Travelogue (Tue., Thu.) Rediscovering China (Wed., Fri.)	Travelogue	China This Week
22:00	CCTV News		
22:30	Centre Stage		
23:00	Sports Scene		
23:15	Learn to Speak Chinese		
23:30	Nature & Science	World Insight	China Today
23:55	Chinese Civilization		
00:00	CCTV News		
00:30	Around China		
01:00	Biz China	Financial Review	Business Guide
01:30	Dialogue		
02:00	Culture Express		
02:30	Documentary		
03:00	CCTV News		
03:30	Dialogue (Mon.) Travelogue (Tue., Thu.) Rediscovering China (Wed., Fri.)	Travelogue	China This Week

\* A blank in the Saturday or Sunday column indicates the same program was on in this timeslot as during Monday – Friday.

Table 8: Schedule of CCTV International after May 2004 relaunch

Time	Monday – Friday	Saturday *	Sunday *
04:00	CCTV News		
04:30	Documentary		
05:00	News Updates		Sports Weekend
05:15	Sports Scene		
05:30	Nature & Science	Centre Stage	Centre Stage
05:55	Chinese Civilization **		
06:00	Biz China		
06:30	Around China	World Insight	China This Week
07:00	Asia Today		
07:30	Dialogue		
08:00	World Wide Watch		
08:30	Culture Express		
09:00	News Updates		
09:15	Learn to Speak Chinese		Up Close
09:30	Rediscovering China (Mon., Wed., Fri.) Travelogue (Tue., Thu., Sat.)		
10:00	News Updates		Sports Weekend
10:15	Sports Scene		
10:30	Documentary		
11:00	Biz China		
11:30	Nature & Science	Centre Stage	Centre Stage
11:55	Chinese Civilization		
12:00	CCTV News		
12:30	Around China	World Insight	China This Week
13:00	CCTV News		
13:30	Dialogue		
14:00	Biz China		
14:30	Culture Express		
15:00	News Updates		
15:15	Learn to Speak Chinese		Up Close
15:30	Rediscovering China (Mon., Wed., Fri.) Travelogue (Tue., Thu., Sat.)		
16:00	News Updates		Sports Weekend
16:15	Sports Scene		
16:30	Documentary		
17:00	CCTV News		
17:30	Nature & Science	Centre Stage	Centre Stage
17:55	Chinese Civilization		
18:00	Biz China		
18:30	Around China	World Insight	China This Week
19:00	World Wide Watch		
19:30	Dialogue		
20:00	Asia Today		
20:30	Culture Express		
21:00	CCTV News		CCTV News
21:15			Up Close
21:30	Rediscovering China (Mon., Wed., Fri.) Travelogue (Tue., Thu., Sat.)		
22:00	Biz China		
22:30	Documentary		
23:00	News Updates		Sports Weekend
23:15	Sports Scene		
23:30	Nature & Science	Centre Stage	Centre Stage
23:55	Chinese Civilization		
00:00	CCTV News		
00:30	Around China	World Insight	China This Week
01:00	Biz China		
01:30	Dialogue		
02:00	Asia Today		
02:30	Culture Express		
03:00	News Updates		
03:15	Learn to Speak Chinese		Up Close
03:30	Rediscovering China (Mon., Wed., Fri.) Travelogue (Tue., Thu., Sat.)		

\* A blank in the Saturday or Sunday column indicates the same program was on in this timeslot as during Monday – Friday.



Table 9: Section responsible for programs

Section	Pre-relaunch	Post-relaunch
Features	Around China Centre Stage Chinese Civilization Documentary Nature & Science Rediscovering China Travelogue	Around China Centre Stage Chinese Civilization Documentary Nature & Science Rediscovering China Travelogue Up Close
News	Biz China Business Guide CCTV News China This Week China Today Culture Express Dialogue Financial Review  News Asia Sports Scene  World Insight World Wide Watch	Asia Today Biz China  CCTV News China This Week  Culture Express Dialogue  News Updates  Sports Scene Sports Weekend World Insight World Wide Watch
Production House	Learn to Speak Chinese Shanghai Today	Learn to Speak Chinese  Weather <sup>79</sup>

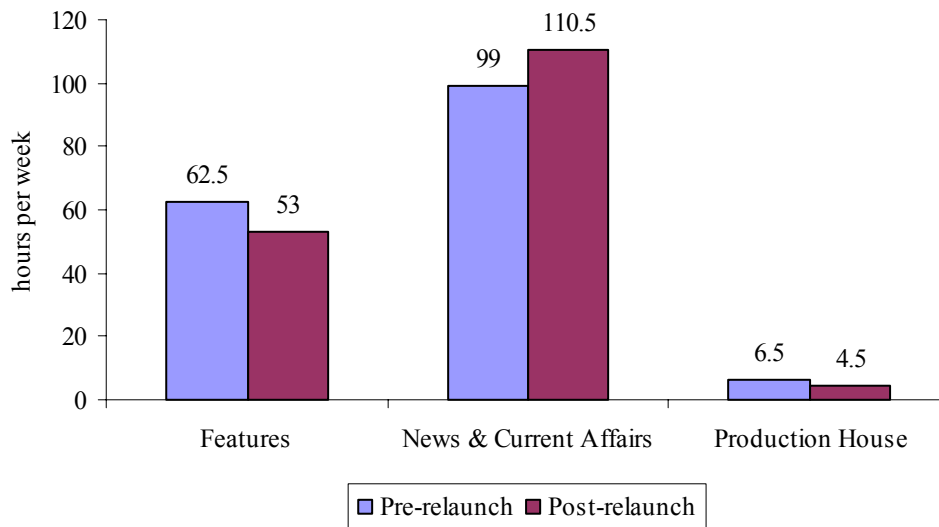
The number of hours weekly of news associated with each news section pre- and post-relaunch is shown in Figure 2. Within News, News Asia was dropped but was replaced by Asia Today, tripling the hours of Asian news. The amount of business news increased slightly, as the number of daily business news programs was increased from five to six. Two business programs, Business Guide and Financial Review, were dropped.

<sup>79</sup> Weather is not included in Tables 7 & 8, as it was treated as part of the news broadcasts into which it was inserted.

But the weekday business show, Biz China, was expanded into the vacated ‘slots’ (times). The number of CCTV News bulletins was cut from ten to six daily. However one-and-three-quarter hours daily of News Updates were added. The result was a slight weekly increase of general news (CCTV News, News Updates and World Wide Watch) from 38.5 hours to 39.25 hours. Culture Express was moved from the top to the bottom of the hour in line with management’s desire to put hard news at the top of every hour. However its weekly programming remained at fourteen hours. China Today, one of two magazine style shows highlighting developments in the PRC, Hong Kong and Macao, was dropped. A studio discussion show, Dialogue, fell from sixteen to fourteen hours a week. Finally, in line with management’s desire to strengthen sports’ coverage ahead of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, sports news more than doubled, from 3.5 to eight hours a week.

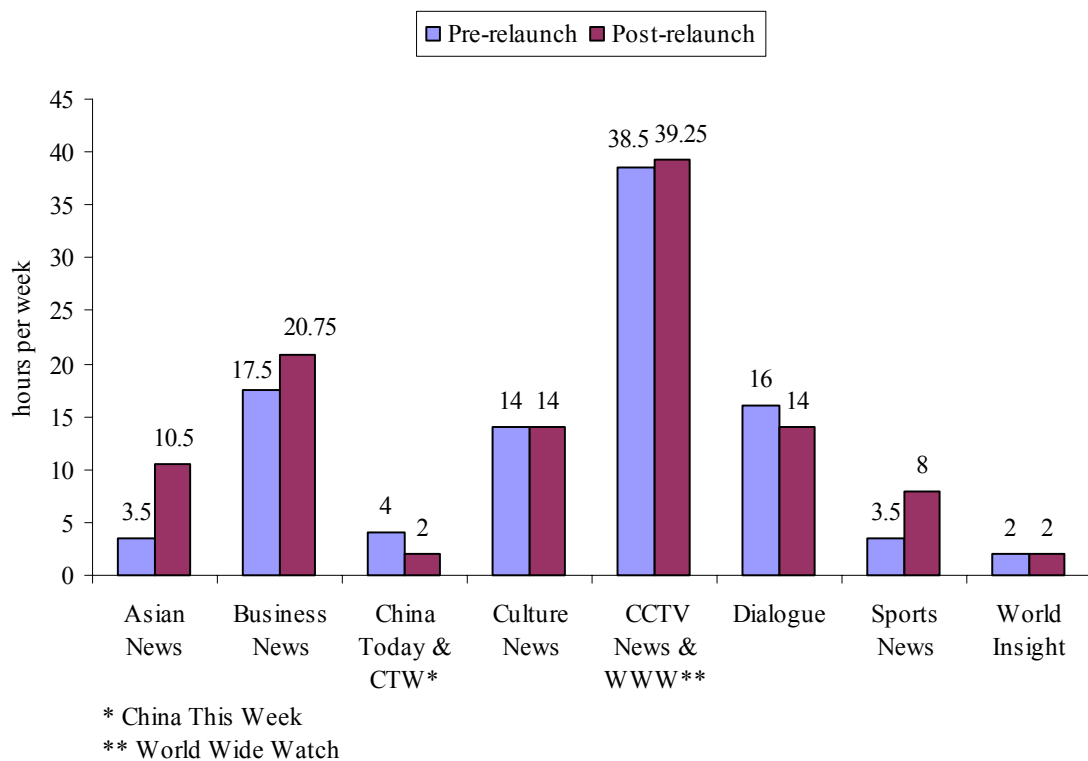
Minor changes were made to Features programming. Notably, the department

Figure 1: Hours of weekly programming by section



introduced a weekly studio guest show, Up Close, which was recorded before a live audience, a first for CCTV-9. Of the two programs delivered by production houses, Shanghai TV's Shanghai Today was dropped, while Learn to Speak Chinese was retained. The number of programs on CCTV-9 remained the same at twenty-one pre- and post-relaunch (Table 9).<sup>80</sup> Of the twenty-one, sixteen were the same show as prior to the relaunch. Of the remaining five, two (News Updates & Sports Weekend) were truncated or expanded versions of CCTV News and Sports Scene respectively. Two new shows were launched, Asia Today (News) and Up Close (Features). Weather was introduced and produced in association with the National Weather Station (中央气象台).

Figure 2: Hours per week of programming by news section



<sup>80</sup> Management counted 19 post-relaunch (Jiang & Liu, 2004, p. 54). However this figure includes News Updates as part of CCTV news and Sports Weekend as part of Sports Scene.

Substantial changes were made to the packaging of almost all of the programs, in both the News and Feature departments. Graphics were revamped, new ‘promos’ (short advertisements for shows that CCTV-9 inserted in programming breaks) made and in some case new computer-generated backdrops (video keys<sup>81</sup>) were introduced for anchors. The general news section moved offices. The offices of specialist news programs were renovated. Finally, new sets were built in a revamped studio for CCTV News, News Updates, World Wide Watch, Biz China, Sports Scene, Asia Today and Dialogue.

When the new look went to air, reaction was mixed. Writing in the August 2004 issue of 电视研究 (Dianshi Yanjiu – TV Research), management hailed the relaunch as an almost unqualified success:

On May 3, 2004 CCTV’s English Channel was relaunched with a completely new look ... CCTV-9 has changed from being a news-oriented comprehensive channel to an English news channel. The number of reports on international topics has been increased, and international issues are being reported from China’s position and point of view. A rolling broadcast has been implemented for general news. Specialist news is prominent. In particular economic news, cultural news and sporting news have been strengthened ... (Jiang & Liu, 2004, p. 54)

Jiang & Liu (2004) continue that the relaunch was well received by the audience. Over a thousand emails and telephone calls indicated overall satisfaction: “compared to the former channel, after the relaunch the lineup, the new sets, the performance of the anchors, etc. were seen as a marked improvement, imparting a fresh perspective” (p. 55). The only criticism of the relaunch appeared to come from a “number of viewers, [who] bluntly indicated that the rolling news needs to update more often, the anchors need to improve, stop fidgeting, pay more attention to their language and wardrobe, while the

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<sup>81</sup> Video keys and chroma keys allow for the substitution of background elements within a broadcast setting. World Insight used a video key set to blue. The anchor performed in front of an empty blue screen. However the audience saw a stylized globe revolving behind him with a giant monitor to his left on screen, neither of which existed in reality.

color scheme for the news sets needs further improvement” (p. 55). According to management, SARFT also welcomed the revamped channel:

The SARFT is very pleased, very satisfied with our relaunch.

Did they say why?

The quality and the relaunch, we changed quite a lot of things, like the studio, the newsroom, the package, and the format, and also the overall design.

But if SARFT and CCTV put on a public show of satisfaction with the relaunch, reaction within the channel was ambivalent. In its report after the relaunch, CCTV management listed the successes noted in the public document, providing more detail. However, present in the internal report, but missing from the public document was a key demand relating the relaunch to the goals for the channel set by Politburo member Li Changchun.

### **The blueprint for the relaunch**

In the original blueprint for the relaunch, the Overseas Service Center (OSC) noted that in his directive dated September 16, 2003 (see p. 88), Li had indicated that “the objective [of the relaunch] is for CCTV-9 to become an internationally influential and competitive international news channel in line with China’s international status” (一个目标是:把CCTV-9办成与中国国际地位相适应, 具有国际影响力和竞争力的国际新闻频道) (CCTV, 2003c). However, in its report following the relaunch, management concluded:

[f]ollowing the relaunch CCTV-9 without doubt has acquired the basic qualities of an international news channel, but there is a considerable way to go for CCTV-9 “to become an internationally influential and competitive international news channel in line with China’s international status.”

改版后的CCTV-9均具备了一流国际频道的基本特质, 但距离“与中国国际

地位相适应，具有国际影响力和竞争力的国际新闻频道”的要求还有相当的路程 (CCTV, 2003a)

However, if straightforward acknowledgement of shortcomings in the relaunch was typical of the stoic professionalism of CCTV-9's senior management, both public and in-house reports after the relaunch glossed one salient dimension: the channel after the relaunch bore little resemblance to that envisaged in the first draft of the planning documents prepared before the relaunch.

In its report dated October 10, 2003, prepared in response to Li Changchun's September 16 directive and the September 22 visit to the channel by Xu Guangchun (see p. 88), at the time Director of SARFT and Deputy Head of the CPD, CCTV's Overseas Service Center noted that among the "adjustments" called for was consideration:

that all the programming [on CCTV-9] be news or news oriented; drop teaching and arts programming ...  
(频道栏目设置全部为新闻和新闻性栏目，停办教学和文艺栏目) (CCTV, 2003c).

Although the OSC document qualifies the latter request, noting that events like the "China Pakistan Television week" or the "China France Year of Culture" were worthy of coverage as the OSC considered they had a news element, clearly radical change was on the agenda for CCTV-9. This is evident from the recommendations that the OSC drew up in response to the directives and tabled as guidelines for the relaunch.

Among those recommendations, the OSC called for the following programs to be dropped (停办栏目) from the schedule: Centre Stage, Rediscovering China, Around China, China Today, Chinese Civilization, Learning Chinese, Financial Review, and Business Guide. However as already noted (see p. 206), of these, only China Today, Financial Review and Business Guide were missing from the revamped lineup, and all of these were news programs or news magazines. Post-relaunch, all of the educational and

arts programming was retained. In its report following the relaunch, management (CCTV, 2003a) mounted a spirited defense explaining the change of direction:

The point of a news channel is to first broadcast domestic and foreign news and then follow up with in depth analysis and report every aspect of a story. In the case of a big breaking story, stay with it for the interim, as for example the case was with our special reports on the Iraq War in 2003. But news like Iraq doesn't happen every day. Putting the latest news at the top of the hour is enough for the viewer in most cases. Moreover, an audience watching a single channel won't be satisfied only with news. They will have other demands. Therefore CCTV-9 has retained its documentary, feature and educational programming as they are absolutely necessary to enrich the channel as a whole, enliven the atmosphere of the channel and embody the rhythm of change ...

新闻频道的注意在于，发生在国内外的重大新闻事件能够以第一时效进行报道并进行及时的深度分析，在遇重大突发事件时能够进行长时间的全方位报道，如2003年伊拉克战争特别报道。但这个世界上并非天天发生伊拉克战争那样的重大新闻，常态的“正点由新闻，次次有更新”足以满足受众对信息的要求。另一方面，观众收看一个频道不会仅仅满足于新闻需求，还有其它要求，因此，CCTV-9 保留纪录片，专题片和效学片等中国特色的节目是十分必要的，既可以使得整个频道内容更加丰富，也可以活跃频道的气氛，体现节奏的变化。

... if you want viewers to stick with CCTV-9, you have to have enough “bait” to attract them. China's performing arts and their artistic enchantment are enough to conquer the Western audience. Programs highlighting China's natural beauty and scenic spots, its local customs, food, even its character-based writing can win over the [existing] regular audience ...

要想让观众所定CCTV-9，就必须有足以吸引他们的“饵料”。中国的表演艺术以其独特的艺术魅力是能够征服西方观众的。其他方面，如中国的风景名胜，风土人情，中华美食，甚至方块汉字等极具中国特色的节目能赢得固定观众。

... the emphasis on the channel's character as “your window on China” is perfectly handled by our existing magazine programs like Travelogue, Documentary, Nature and Science, Rediscovering China, Around China, Chinese Civilization, etc.

... 为了突显中国窗口的特色，精办已有的介绍中国的标志性栏目，如：“旅游指南”(Travelogue), “纪录片”(Documentary), “自然与科学”(Nature

and Science), “外国人看中国” (Rediscovering China), “中国各地” (Around China) 和 “中华文明” (Chinese Civilization) 等。

In the remainder of this chapter, I attempt to explain the process by which the relaunch was planned and carried out only to achieve almost the opposite in key respects of what was intended, yet still earn the praise of SARFT and by implication, the Party.

#### **PLANNING AND EXECUTING THE RELAUNCH**

In my time as a participant observer at the channel, I never doubted the commitment of the Controller to news or to his vision for the development of CCTV-9 as an international news channel. However, the Controller was only an element of management, and one of his deputies was also head of Features, suggesting that the latter department had a strong voice in management decisions. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that after initial hesitation as to whether the demands put on the channel were realizable, management collectively did attempt to transform CCTV-9 in the manner outlined in the OSC blueprint. However, management was only one, albeit the most powerful layer in a complex web of political, economic, institutional, professional and personal relationships that constituted daily life at the channel.

From my discussion of Certeau’s (1984) analysis of the strategies and tactics of those more and less powerful within and between institutions, and the deployment of his analysis by Pan (2005) and Pan & Lu (2003) to account for resistance and bounded innovation in media reform in the PRC, clearly CCTV-9 was a contested site during the period leading up to the relaunch date.

Management was sandwiched between the demands of the Party and SARFT and the willingness and ability of CCTV-9’s staff to meet those demands, as articulated by management. Moreover, unlike advertisement-driven and commercially profitable channels within the CCTV stable, although CCTV-9 did begin to carry some advertising



in January 2005, during the relaunch its budget was wholly provided from within the overall CCTV budget. As a result, budgetary constraints added further uncertainty to the development of the relaunch.<sup>82</sup>

In addition, in so far as the blueprint envisaged a wide-ranging set of relationships with other powerful institutions within the PRC and international media systems, including *Xinhua*, *China Radio International*, Reuters and the Associated Press, much would also depend on how relationships were managed not only vertically from the top of the Party down to the lowest level within the production system at CCTV-9, but also horizontally with other media. Therefore, whether the blueprint would be followed depended as much on factors not under management's control and on the willingness and ability of the rank and file staff to implement the blueprint, as it would on the wishes of the Party, SARFT and management at CCTV-9.

To explain why the relaunch proceeded in the manner it did, I focus on the key institutions and persons involved in its planning: the Party and SARFT (as represented in the draft OSC blueprint); CCTV, including the OSC and CCTV-9 senior management; the relaunch planning committee (made up of CCTV-9 management, program producers, myself and the head of the foreign experts' group); and a US-based consultant with considerable expertise in news production and management, whom News Corporation provided to CCTV-9 as part of its relationship with CCTV. My involvement in the planning of the relaunch was at the request of the CCTV-9 Controller. Given that my insight into the planning process began with the work of the relaunch planning committee, it is here, that I shall begin this discussion.

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<sup>82</sup> The CCTV-9 budget in 2005 was 100 million yuan (about 12 million USD). Beginning from January 2005, CCTV-9 was permitted to carry advertisements at a maximum rate of four minutes per hour, but this did not cover costs. In addition, any advertising revenue from CCTV-9 did not go to the channel directly, but went to CCTV's advertising department (source: CCTV Management).

## **Internal negotiation of the relaunch**

Management set up the committee in November 2003 to brainstorm issues associated with the relaunch. The committee first met on November 4, a Tuesday, at 10.00am. This became its regular meeting day and time. Present at the meeting were CCTV-9 senior management, executive producers from News and Features and myself. The controller opened the meeting by tabling the above-noted blueprint prepared by the OSC.

From the outset, the draft generated heated discussion, and from the side of Features, which was most radically affected by the relaunch, considerable consternation. Although it was only the first of several meetings, from the outset evidently the relaunch was going to prove a hard sell within the channel.

In subsequent meetings (and more importantly, in discussions within management and between management and producers), both News and Features sought to establish the value of their programming to the channel in its current form.

At stake was not only the existing programming, but more importantly, from the point of view of the personnel involved, their work. Should the relaunch go ahead according to the OSC blueprint, many in Features would be required to do an entirely different kind of work. Not only was most of the department's existing programming facing the axe, but in line with the suggestion that all programming have a news orientation, Features was now being expected to move away from arts programming more towards magazine style programming with a news angle.

According to one person in Features, the blueprint, once tabled, triggered "panic" within the department. Management and producers in Features held emergency meetings, the upshot of which was a decision that evolved over time to defend their department in its existing form, while revising implementation of the blueprint.

Beginning with the second planning meeting, Features began to lay out a series of reasons why the axing of their programming would be detrimental to the development of CCTV-9, and contrary to the spirit of the blueprint. In particular, their leadership argued that CCTV-9 could not provide a “window on China,” unless the arts programming and non-news magazine shows produced by Features were part of the lineup.

Independently from the resistance to change within Features, resistance to any substantial change to the status quo also quickly gathered momentum within News & Current Affairs. The core of the relaunch was the demand to make all programming news or news-oriented. However, no clear provision was made within the blueprint for the extra staffing that would be required to run a rolling news service. Most of the extra work that the relaunch would levy on News & Current Affairs was to be met with existing staff levels, with little provision for additional compensation.

Once program producers in News & Current Affairs understood that they would be expected to increase output without what they considered commensurate compensation, then they had little incentive to push strongly for the relaunch. This resistance resulted in staff in News & Current Affairs taking on few new responsibilities when the rolling news service was inaugurated on May 3, 2004.

The potential for disruption to the status quo which the relaunch promised is obvious from the blueprint’s slate of axed, retained (and revamped), and new programming planned for the relaunch (Table 10, p. 217), and from the tentative daily rundown originally envisaged for CCTV International (Table 11, p. 218). Together these two tables indicate the direction in which management wanted to take the channel, and by comparison with Table 7 & Table 8 and Figure 1 & Figure 2, how little actually changed.

Of the ten planned new shows, three went ahead: Asia Today (News); People (Features) which went to air as Up Close; and Weather which was produced and packaged off-site and inserted as a short segment into News programming.

Table 10: Planned changes to programming pre- & post-relaunch

Retained Programs	New Programs	Axed Programs
Biz China (N) CCTV News (N) Culture express (N) Dialogue (C) Documentary (F) Nature & Science (F) Sports Scene (N) Travelogue (F) World Wide Watch (N)	Asia Today (C) Discovery (F) Globiz (N) Many Voices* News Digest (N) One World (F) On Location (F) People (F) Talk Biz (N) Weather (P)	Around China (F) Business Guide (N) Center Stage (F) China Today (N) Chinese Civilization (F) Financial Review (N) Learning Chinese (P) Rediscovering China (F) Shanghai Today (P)

(C) Current Affairs, (F) Features, (N) News, (P) Production House

\* The blueprint did not assign Many Voices to a particular department.

Table 11: Originally envisaged lineup for CCTV International

0600	CCTV News
0630	Culture Express
0700	CCTV News
0730	Dialogue
0800	World Wide Watch (1 hour)
0900	Globiz
0930	Many Voices
1000	CCTV News
1030	Sports Scene
1100	News Digest
1130	On Location / One World
1200	CCTV News
1230	Travelogue / Nature & Science
1300	CCTV News
1330	Dialogue
1400	Globiz
1430	Discovery
1500	CCTV News
1530	Culture Express
1600	Biz China
1630	Sports Scene
1700	CCTV News
1730	On Location / One World
1800	Asia Today
1830	Many Voices
1900	CCTV News
1930	Dialogue
2000	World Wide Watch (one hour)
2100	Biz China
2130	Culture Express
2200	CCTV News
2230	Sports Scene
2300	Globiz (one hour)
0000	CCTV News
0030	On Location / One World
0100	Asia Today
0130	Dialogue
0200	Biz China
0230	Many Voices
0300	CCTV News
0330	Culture Express
0400	Globiz
0430	Sports Scene
0500	CCTV News
0530	Travelogue / Nature & Science

The shows that never got off the drawing board were (source: CCTV, 2003c):

- Discovery (F): A lifestyle magazine that would feature foreign perspective on the PRC and Chinese perspective on other countries
- One World (F): A news magazine that would look at the diversity of peoples around the world, with a special emphasis on developing countries
- On Location (F): A reporter's magazine
- Globiz (N): A new show focusing on global business and finance
- Talk Biz (N): A business discussion program
- Many Voices: A studio discussion show with multiple guests (as many as four was the number given in discussion)
- News Digest (N): A daily look at news in major newspapers, magazines, and online

In asking why so many of the planned shows failed to materialize, from interviews, observation and discussion, the key problems were:

- reluctance of management to let go of gains they had already made in programming
- too few people and not enough time to carry out the design and implementation of the new programming, and re-orientation of existing programming
- reluctance among staff to take on extra work, without what they considered adequate compensation

The first of these problems related to an earlier revamp of the channel. The September 16, 2003 instruction to relaunch CCTV-9 came closely on the heels of changes introduced in May that year. Then, CCTV-9 had overhauled several of its programs and introduced new programs and program elements. Travelogue, Re-discovering China and World Insight had all been lengthened from fifteen to thirty

minutes. In an excellent example of what Pan (2005) calls “bounded innovation,” management appointed foreigners as hosts of both Biz China and Culture Express, making them the first specialist news shows on CCTV-9 to feature non-PRC nationals as hosts (general news would follow on November 11, 2003, when a Canadian became the first non-Chinese national to host the CCTV News, fronting the 2400 bulletin). Management was clear about the significance of the May revamp:

Following more than three years of development, especially after this year’s revamp in May, CCTV-9 has already become one of the more successful channels worldwide for non-native English speaking countries.

CCTV-9 经过三年多的发展，特别是今年5月改版以后已经成为全世界非母语国家中较出色的英语频道。(CCTV, 2003c)

Management’s conundrum with the demand to relaunch and re-orient the channel just as it was gaining momentum in the wake of a success revamp just months earlier made it less likely that management would resist resistance among staff to the blueprint.

Expanding on the above problems, key issues staff were concerned about were:

- too little time: exactly six months from the date of the first planning group meeting to the relaunch.
- too much work: the relaunch was almost entirely an in-house project. Management expected themselves and staff to keep the existing 24-hour channel running up to the moment of the relaunch, while simultaneously planning and carrying out the design of eight new programs, and a new news studio and newsroom, even as existing facilities were being renovated around them as they kept working.
- too few staff: management and staff regularly complained that they had “too few hands” to run the existing channel. When they were tasked with designing the relaunch and new programming, although personnel gritted their teeth and did a

huge amount of work to ensure the relaunch went ahead, the effort was exhausting and fed into a general sense within the channel that too much was being asked of staff, with too little incentive to justify the effort.

- not enough incentive: staff at CCTV-9 were concerned about pay and conditions. Staff felt they were already putting in more than enough effort to justify their salaries. They had little incentive to do more for the same salary.

These issues, coupled with management's conundrum about the earlier revamp meant that for different reasons, management and staff were on the same side.

### **External constraints on the relaunch**

Resistance to the relaunch was not only internal to the channel. Also damaging to the prospects for realization of the blueprint was the reluctance of external institutions to play the role allotted them. In particular, the OSC blueprint called for *Xinhua* and *China Radio International* (CRI) to play key roles in the development of CCTV International. In the September 16 directive, Li called for a transformation in the working style, not only of CCTV-9, but of the PRC's major media that deal with external publicity. The details were provided in the blueprint:

The transformation of style also means changing from CCTV's current "one man army" style, to forming a "joint strike force" involving *Xinhua*, CRI and CCTV, a joint force for news reporting that would jointly forge a new image for China's international broadcast media.

转变方式就是要从现在的中央电视台的"单兵作战"转变为新华社, 国际台与中央电视台的"多兵种联合作战", 在新闻报道方面形成合力, 共同打造国际传媒新形象。(CCTV, 2003c)

The blueprint issued by the OSC outlining its "recommendations" (考虑) for the relaunch called for the formation of cooperation agreements to broaden CCTV-9's news-gathering ability. The "initial conception" (初步设想) was as follows:



In any news program, use first person on the spot reports from the foreign correspondents of this channel, *Xinhua* and CRI, whether it is breaking news or an in-depth report. The most pressing issue is to find out which of these correspondents has the ability to report in English, and once that is known, they need to be trained in television. They need to be provided with video phones, digital cameras, etc. CCTV-9 must not be averse to using reports from *Xinhua* and CRI. On the contrary, we should publicize our cooperation with *Xinhua* and CRI to form China's news channel.

在各档新闻栏目中，由本台，新华社和国际台驻外记者第一人称方式讲述在驻在国的所见所闻，既可以是时效性很强的突发新闻，也可以是对某一问题的关注。目前最需要做的事是，确定哪些记者具备英语报道的能力，一旦确定下来，就必须对他们进行电视业务培训。为他们配备可视电话，数码摄像机和数码照相机等设备。CCTV-9 并不忌讳用新华社和国际台的名义进行报道，相反，要不断宣传新华社和国际台与我共同打造中国的新闻频道。(CCTV, 2003c)

The planned tie-up with *Xinhua* and CRI was ambitious and would have greatly extended CCTV-9's foreign policy and foreign news nets. However, as the PRC's premier news agency and an institution directly under the State Council, *Xinhua* had little to gain by partnering with a minor channel within the larger CCTV structure. At the same time, in the commercialized news environment that now predominates in the PRC, *Xinhua* undoubtedly sees CCTV as a competitor, regardless of the Party's call for a "joint strike force" of the country's major media.

The plan to turn *Xinhua*'s and CRI's foreign correspondents into multi-media reporters was also ambitious, too ambitious for the timeline envisaged in the relaunch, especially as most of them had no broadcast experience.<sup>83</sup> It was not realistic to expect to identify, equip and train journalists, who themselves would have had little incentive to work for CCTV-9, between November 2003 and the relaunch in May 2004. Within

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<sup>83</sup> The kind of cooperation envisaged here is not impossible. When BBC World was launched, the BBC managed to turn its radio correspondents into television reporters. Conversely, when Reuters purchased Visnews as the platform on which to build Reuters Television, Reuters failed to turn its television news agency into a business broadcaster. I worked for Visnews at the time of the purchase and the resistance to plans to use its staff to service business television was palpable among staff, who saw themselves as 'news' people, and business news as almost a parody of 'real' news.

weeks of the first planning group meeting, any talk of involving *Xinhua* in the relaunch had ended, and the plans for the agency's involvement were shelved. The case was much the same with CRI.<sup>84</sup>

The blueprint also urged closer cooperation with foreign broadcasters:

... invite reporters from foreign media with whom CCTV-9 has a relationship to be special correspondents, who can provide timely and objective reports on major news from their countries ...

聘用有合作关系的外国媒体记者为CCTV-9特约记者，在当地发生重大新闻时能提供及时，客观的报道... (CCTV, 2003c)

However, apart from a limited project (see p. 226) to use Reuters' correspondents for live 'phoners'<sup>85</sup> on breaking stories, again the plans were not realized in the relaunch.

In addition, the blueprint called for Shanghai TV to play an important role in the CCTV-9 operation, providing timely financial news from the PRC's financial hub. However, Shanghai TV, which had provided a daily fifteen minutes news bulletin from the coastal city pre-relaunch, was missing from the rundown after the relaunch.

According to people involved in the planning process, Shanghai TV had been reluctant to work too closely with CCTV-9 because they had their own plans for the future.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, Shanghai TV was a limited option, with a news net that could serve at best the region that was home to the coastal city. Nevertheless, the loss of Shanghai TV was a serious blow for a channel, which has an extremely limited domestic news net (for more on this, see p. 417).

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<sup>84</sup> The BBC's success in turning its radio correspondents into television reporters suggests that long term CRI may be a viable option for supplying CCTV-9 with news, and vice versa. But the bigger issue is that in the PRC, the major media see one another as competitors, not as potential partners.

<sup>85</sup> A 'phoner' is a report by telephone or telephone interview usually accompanied by video and a graphic, often a map showing the site, and a photograph and the name and title of the person speaking.

<sup>86</sup> Shanghai TV had been attempting to win SARFT approval for an English-language channel. That channel went to air on January 1, 2008.

In short, within a very short time after the planning process got under way, CCTV-9 had to face the reality that it could not rely on Shanghai TV, *Xinhua*, or CRI to provide reports. Li Changchun had envisaged a “joint strike force.” But in reality, CCTV-9 would continue to act as a lone soldier.

### **Foreground our strengths, hide our weaknesses**

Faced with the realization that the planned external partnerships would not materialize, management called on staff to “foreground our strengths, hide our weaknesses” (还要扬长避短).<sup>87</sup> The onus to provide programming for CCTV International fell on the existing personnel and production departments within CCTV-9. Of the two options open to management, to force through the programming envisaged in the blueprint in the face of opposition from the production departments, or to change the blueprint to better reflect the possibilities of the existing channel, the latter option was not simply easier, it was both pragmatic and realistic.

As the planning process proceeded, the blueprint was updated to reflect the changes management was making to accommodate the reality of the situation. In a revision tabled to the planning group as an appendix to the original, the changing parameters of the relaunch began to emerge. Three programs from Features on the original list of those facing the axe – Rediscovering China, Around China and Chinese Civilization – were moved to the list of programs to be retained. The rhetoric deployed by Features to defend its programs – that they were indispensable as a “window on China,” now entered the management discourse on development of the relaunch:

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<sup>87</sup> In Appendix 1 (discussed below) to the OSC blueprint, management writes 还要扬长补短 (“[We] must foreground our strengths, make up for our weaknesses”). The phrase either contains a typographical error, substituting the 5<sup>th</sup> character 补 (bu) for 避 (bi), which is how the traditional phrase is written, or it is a variation on the same theme. The idea was that CCTV-9 should make the best possible use of its existing resources, a major concession to the forces resisting change to the channel.

In order to emphasize the role [of the channel] as a “window on China,” the very popular Around China and Chinese Civilization should be retained as a daily 30 minute block.

The meticulously crafted audience favorites, Rediscovering China and Travelogue, will enable the channel to really become a window on China for the foreign audience.

为了突显“中国窗口”的作用，要保留现在颇受欢迎的介绍中国的专题栏目“中国各地”(AROUND CHINA), 与“中华文明”(CHINESE CIVILIZATION) 组成一个日播 30 分钟的节目板块。

精心制作观众反馈最多的“外国人看中国”(REDISCOVERING CHINA) 和“旅游指南”(TRAVELOGUE), 使其真正成为外国观众了解中国的窗口。

Moreover, of those programs still facing the axe, the language was softened, calling for elements of these programs to go into existing and news programs. “Elements” (部分内容) of Center Stage were to be “incorporated” (融入) in Culture Express. Those elements of Learning Chinese appropriate for teaching business and travel Chinese would be “incorporated” (融入) into Biz China and Travelogue. The “core content” (主要内容) of Financial Review and Business Guide would go into the weekend edition of Biz China. And elements of China Today and Shanghai Today would be incorporated in Asia Today (CCTV, 2003b).

In the revised blueprint, management repeated its original recognition that CCTV-9 could not compete with the BBC-WS and CNN-I on big international stories, but should focus on its “relative strength” (比较优势) on the China and regional story and stories from developing countries. However, with the loss of *Xinhua* and CRI as possible sources for the foreign and foreign policy news, management increased the emphasis on using foreign and transnational media in an attempt to boost its story supply.

In addition to the original plan for special reports from foreign journalists, management now planned to expand its relationship with video wholesalers Reuters and

Associated Press Television (APTN) and request special reports on breaking news from areas where CCTV-9 did not have representation. CCTV-9 approached Reuters, who made available its journalists worldwide for ‘phoners.’ However, as already noted and for reasons I discuss below (see p. 343), that initiative faltered soon after the relaunch.

As the clock ticked down to the relaunch, the planning process stalled on the issue of programming. The meetings of the planning group shifted focus to other topics as it became increasingly clear that the most conservative plans for changes in programming were unlikely to be realized. Eventually management dropped its attempts to repackage elements of existing programs in the new programs originally envisaged, and the new programs were dropped in favor of the existing lineup. Of the ten planned new programs envisaged – Asia Today, Discovery, Globiz, Many Voices, News Digest, One World, On Location, People, Talk Biz and Weather – two were produced, Asia Today and Up Close (People). Weather was delivered already packaged.

### **The new studio, sets and newsroom**

By early 2004, the possibility of transforming the channel in the manner outlined in the original blueprint had already been shelved. The focus of the planning group shifted away from programming to the design of the new news studio and sets, backdrops for other programs, graphics and personnel issues.

When CCTV International went to air from its refurbished studio and new news set at 0400 on May 3, 2004 with a live half hour of CCTV News, the sets, the studio, the Master Control Room, the video and audio editing equipment, the newsroom, the news writing and editing computers, the anchors’ changing and makeup room, and the news editorial office were all new. Much had changed.

However, how much of the changes would have been visible to the viewer would have depended on how much attention one pays to the mise-en-scene of television, compared to how much attention one pays to the substance of what is being said and shown. A viewer would have seen a change in the back drop to the news anchor and different on-air graphics. Almost everything else on screen remained the same before and after the relaunch.

The major changes associated with the relaunch were primarily internal and invisible to the viewer. As part of the relaunch, CCTV provided the channel with funds for remodeling its offices and News studio. The news editorial and writing sections were moved from the 8<sup>th</sup> floor to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor into space vacated by CCTV's "Western Region" channel.<sup>88</sup> Other offices were refurbished. However, CCTV-9 did not have a budget for re-design, so much of the re-design was left to the CCTV Technical Department, which provides support services for all the channels.

The new studio sets and the layout of the newsroom were designed in-house. The relaunch planning committee was actively involved in discussion of the new sets, and it would be wrong to single out any individual over the result, as the design supervisor was working with the input of the entire group. Nevertheless the final result fell short of expectations. Reaction among staff to the new facilities was mixed, but primarily negative. Because of problems with lighting, the new news studio provoked the most averse reaction:

[Jirik] If you could change anything [associated with the relaunch] ... what are the things you would change?

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<sup>88</sup> The "Western Region" channel was a failed attempt by SARFT, launched on May 12, 2002 and formally shut down on December 28, 2004, to use television to promote development in the PRC's western regions (for details see Chen, 2006).

[anchor] I'd go straight for the studio with an axe... that's what I would do... I think that's a very sad thing that the people watching our program can't see this very modern looking newsroom with so many people walking up and down, sitting at computers. They can't see it in the background, like CNN has. And, I think that's just tragic.

[Jirik] What do you think of the new sets? The new on air look?

[reporter] The anchor's [backdrop] is really really bad. This is the worst thing I've ever seen in China. This reflects the old Cold War thinking, and centering China in the center. And making, this is not television, and making a map and the backdrop all resemblance of different continent, this is really really bad. I think China wants to make an international standard and open image, we should make a vague background, or even a China, Beijing's background maybe, or whatever it is, but not that.

When I asked management about the sets, they acknowledged problems and noted that the time frame had prevented better design:

The new sets is done by CCTV designers, within CCTV actually. It was, it was a work of emergency actually, since we didn't have much time to have more talks. At that time, before the relaunch we, we were totally occupied by the routine broadcasting at the same time we have to build, to have a brand new studio. We have to fight on two different fronts.

Management also noted that plans were already afoot to replace the new news sets with a better design at the earliest possible opportunity. This was in fact done, but not before I left Beijing in December 2005.

Reaction to the new newsroom was more positive:

[copy editor] I really didn't like it at first, and I think they could have given us somewhere with windows. It would have made a lot of difference to everyone. The sound booths are appalling, the doors don't shut, the microphones don't work. They're continually having to call technicians in, and I think if they spend that much on it, they could have just got that pretty important part of the story right. And there were a lot of corners cut I felt. But overall I think the office is new, it's modern, and it's got a good feeling about it, it's a real buzzing newsroom. Especially now that we're much closer to the studio, closer to the makeup room, we can see who the anchors are when they come in, it's much more, you know, you just, you're part of a team much more now...

[anchor] When we moved down to the second floor, I thought, you know, this is really good, and I still feel that.

[Jirik] What do you think of our new offices?

[director] That's the best we can get. They don't have the choice, much better than the 8th floor.

My own sense was that the planning committee, including myself, had failed the channel by not pushing harder for an audited design or external designers, especially for the sets and the studio. Although the question of bringing in outside designers was raised at the meetings, budgetary constraints ruled against their use. However, in hindsight, it seemed to me that corners had been cut in the wrong places, and that we, as the responsible committee, had nobody to blame but ourselves.

As a participant and observer, my own frustration with the design process reached a low point one day when I saw technicians installing television monitors in the new newsroom. The monitors were essential for news editing, the first place a news editor looks for signs or confirmation of breaking or updated news. CCTV has access to the 24-hour signals from both Reuters and APTN. In addition it has an internal channel system that can monitor every channel available by satellite or cable in Beijing, from CCTV to the BBC-WS and CNN-I. However, the 'zhubians' (主编 chief editor) tended to news-edit blind in the old newsroom, because the necessary signals were not piped into the newsroom. With the move downstairs, I had hoped for a change. However, rather than installing small flat screen monitors where they should have gone in the zhubian's office, the technicians were installing large television sets on brackets overlooking a space visible to nobody, apart from those editing video and the anchors in makeup, opposite this space.

When I asked the design supervisor why the monitors were being installed there rather than as small flat screens in the zhubian's office, I was told that the Technical



Department was responsible for installing the monitors, that they were frustrated already by the demands the relaunch was putting on them, and that I would only cause trouble by questioning what they were doing.

As I watched the television sets being installed, in my head flashed an image of my favorite temple in Japan. The Toshogu Shrine in Nikko, north of Tokyo, has images of elephants carved by an artist who had only heard tell of these wondrous beasts. Opposite the weirdly misshapen but strangely recognizable elephants is a 'sacred stable' adorned by a famous carving of the three wise monkeys who see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil, a Japanese representation of the Confucian edict imported from Imperial China.

In a flash, I saw those television sets looming over an empty space as the emblem of a news channel designed by people unfamiliar with the concept of a rolling news channel, which was fated to see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil. And, as a member of the planning group, I was part of the problem. The planning process had failed the channel and the best hopes of the blueprint had died with that failure.

Eventually two large television sets were installed in the zhubian's office (which some zhubians would turn off for fear of radiation poisoning). But the direct feeds from APTN and Reuters never were. The monitors opposite the make-up room were soon permanently switched to entertainment channels, and served as a respite for staff in down time.

Other assessments were more upbeat. One of CCTV-9's advisors remarked in a note to management on the relaunch, that overall the channel had taken a major step forward:

Last night I was introduced to several foreigners who live in Beijing... [One] remarked "Wow, CCTV-9 looks like CNN. It's amazing how it has changed in

the just the past couple of years.” Of course, the foreigner is correct, and a comparison of videotapes from two years ago bears out this view. In fact, virtually every six months or so for the past two years we have remarked at the rapid and dramatic transformation of CCTV-9. Every creative challenge has been met as the channel has been transformed. With the latest relaunch and the new studio facilities, another new and dramatic phase of CCTV-9 now begins. It is typical when implementing the launch of a new channel that the actual execution of the on-air vision is flawed at first. Despite the number of rehearsals, and the best thought out plans of its creators, a new channel only evolves after it begins to air under the rigors of daily on-air performance. This is exactly the situation with the relaunch of CCTV International. The actual creative vision behind the new CCTV International is sound, and has every potential of being fulfilled, but first some significant issues in execution must be resolved.

This assessment struck me as both correct in pointing to significant unresolved issues, and somewhat exaggerated in its emphasis on rapid and dramatic transformation, although management and producers were constantly tweaking the lineup and shows to improve the service. Moreover, substantive changes had taken place in recent years, in particular the May 2003 revamp already mentioned. But how much change one sees really depends on how one measures change. If the constant adjustments, new and revamped shows and changes to packaging as well as the introduction of foreigners on air was the measure, then much changed in the previous two years, and with the latest relaunch. But if the overall tenor of the editorial system (see Chapter 8), the production system (Chapter 9) and the content (Chapter 11) and the majority of the programs, and great majority of the personnel remained in place doing much the same work, then how much had really changed?

Whichever way one looks at it, and especially if looked at from the long-term, the May 3, 2004 relaunch was another milestone in the evolution of the channel. Perhaps most importantly, with the scheduling of news at the top of every hour the relaunch had pushed CCTV-9 further in the direction of becoming a rolling news channel, i.e. a

channel in which news takes priority over all other programming.<sup>89</sup> However, the caveat in the above assessment that “some significant issues in execution must be resolved” points to what, to my mind, was the single most difficult issue the channel faced in the relaunch, changing its editorial structure.

### **The challenge for editorial**

One of the prime tasks the OSC blueprint laid out for the relaunch was an internal reorganization of the news editing process. Most importantly, the blueprint attempted to introduce into CCTV-9 a news editorial system based on news editing norms in newsrooms worldwide. What characterizes these systems are the structure and function of editorial. The structure is made up of the different components in the news making system: news monitoring, news gathering, news production. The functions are the roles each component plays separately, and just as importantly, in relationship with one another.

To anybody familiar with news making processes at channels like CNN-I and BBC-WS, what strikes one immediately about CCTV-9 is the lack of a news editing structure organized around a ‘desk.’ In other words, CCTV-9 lacked the news making center that is the physical and organizational key to news operations at e.g. the BBC (Schlesinger, 1987), and news organizations like CNN and Reuters. I address the reasons why CCTV-9 lacks this mechanism and how the news editing system works in Chapter 8: Editorial. Here I want to discuss why with the relaunch, CCTV-9 failed to break away from its existing system and implement a news editing structure more in line with international norms.

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<sup>89</sup> Strictly speaking, news had topped every hour prior to the relaunch, because Culture Express and Sports Scene were part of the news department. However, after the relaunch, ‘hard’ news was put at the top of every hour.

The OSC blueprint discussed a restructuring of the news editing system, and crucially the introduction of an Assignment Desk (AD) into the system. The AD was modeled on documents prepared for CCTV-9 by News Corporation's consultant. In those documents, the consultant argued that an assignment desk "must be created. This assignment desk will serve as the "heart" of CCTV Worldwide." The AD would have three functions: suggest and assign stories, and do long-term planning; liaise with reporters and CCTV-9's external partners such as *Xinhua*, CRI and Shanghai TV; and coordinate intake (the process of taking in and organizing news, whether from agencies, external partners, reporters or other sources, to make it available for news making). In short, the consultant was suggesting that CCTV-9 lacked what are known in industry parlance as planning and intake desks.

In effect, under the existing structure, output (the news programs) was responsible for not only making the news for on air at CCTV-9, but also monitoring and gathering the raw materials, which went into the programs. Although this structure was suitable for specialist news programs, it put enormous pressure on the general news system, which was meant to be the heart of the CCTV-9 news system. Introducing a planning desk and intake desk into the CCTV-9 editorial system would have greatly eased the pressure on general news output to take responsibility not only for producing news bulletins and coordinating the rolling news service, but for monitoring and organizing the intake of the raw materials for news. Moreover, a number of functions would be introduced into the CCTV-9 editorial system, which CCTV-9 lacked prior to the relaunch. These functions related to news gathering from third parties and ad hoc sources.

The importance of planning and intake for a news organization is clear from the consultant's emphasis that the head of the assignment desk be appointed as a deputy controller, with the same authority as the head of output.

The OSC blueprint repeated this emphasis and included plans for an assignment desk:

The assignment desk is the nerve center of the whole channel, responsible for the daily planning of news and feature programming, arranging for interviews and experts, and coordinating particular programs, etc. At the same time it is an information clearing house. Each day, each program must pool its information and planning with the assignment desk. This way the duty editor, chief editor and assignment desk can discuss with the team leader or producer and decide on particular topics and which section will handle them. The assignment desk will also be responsible for liaising with work units, experts etc. for interviews, as well as with the Overseas Service Center, and other media.

策划联络部 (ASSIGNMENT DESK): 是整个频道的神经中枢, 责任每天新闻和专题节目的策划, 采访外联, 专家预约, 具体节目制作的协调等工作。同时还是频道的信息库。各个节目组必须每天将节目信息和策划计划汇总到策划联络部, 由值班节目总临, 主编和策划联络部人员会同各节目组组长或制片人讨论确定选题和责任制作的节目组。并由策划联络部责任联系采访单位, 专家等, 同时责任与驻外记者站, 其他媒体保持联络和布署任务 (CCTV, 2003c).

The desk was to have a domestic and foreign editor as well as a team responsible for arranging the technical side of intake including live transmissions, recording incoming signals, etc. Finally, a graphics team, “responsible for packaging the programming of the entire channel” (责任全频道界么的包装工作) was attached to the assignment desk.

Discussion within the planning group over establishment of the assignment desk was strained. In particular, output felt it was losing authority over the news. At the planning group meeting that decided the issue, as someone who agreed with the consultant that CCTV-9 lacked the appropriate news editorial structure for an international news channel, I argued for the establishment of a strong assignment desk. However, I also suggested that an assignment desk that did not have real authority within

the channel would be no more than a token gesture. My fear was that the assignment desk would be established but would lack the authority to do its job.

When management created the assignment desk, I was seconded to work on it because of my experience on desks at NBC (in the US network's Moscow bureau) and at Reuters. I began work on February 2, 2004. The desk consisted of a supervisor (at the level of executive producer), two editorial assistants (duty news editors in the industry parlance), an assistant to the supervisor and myself. In addition, the office was shared by a political editor (see Figure 4 p. 258 & p. 261 for an explanation of this role) and an accountant, neither of whom worked there every day.

From the outset the AD faced opposition from within the existing editorial structure, which saw its creation as a diminution of their control of the news and programming. In fact, it was. However, what was not made clear in the OSC blueprint or in the planning group discussions was that creation of the AD was an attempt to strengthen general news by separating output from intake while coordinating their relationship and therefore increasing the efficiency and range of the news gathering process, freeing up producers to focus on putting the best available material in their programs.

In a departure from the consultant's outline, after some haggling over their relative authority, rather than report directly to the Controller, the supervisor put in charge of the AD was asked to report to the Deputy Controller, who was concurrently the Head of News. In theory this was a sensible decision, since it put one person in overall charge of the News, and ensured that output would have the final say in what went to air. That is, the intake side of the News would have to liaise closely with output to ensure the 'right' stories were being chased and covered.

Nevertheless, once the hierarchy of power was established, the hoped for synergies did not evolve. The AD was seen as irrelevant by news producers, who reported to the Deputy Controller (News) (see Figure 4, p. 258) and were accustomed to filling their shows with stories supplied by CCTV-1 and the international news agencies (see Chapter 11: Content). Reporters felt they knew the story better than their colleagues on the AD, and therefore paid it little attention. To a degree, this was correct. Excepting myself, the AD was staffed by people who had no experience of working on an assignment desk of the form envisaged in the OSC blueprint. Moreover, apart from the supervisor, they were junior staff, who had little chance of making their voices heard. In my case, as a foreigner, I was considered an outsider, and although welcomed by my colleagues on the desk, I faced considerable opposition from within the newsroom:

[zhubian] You are a someone from outside, and you want to exert an influence on it [CCTV-9]. We want things to go good, to go for the good. But you are a foreign force, and you want to make it different, make it so different, that many people think it's offensive.

[director] I don't know about how many, how many people like you. But I know there are quite a few people who don't like you frankly.

[Jirik] That's what I've heard. Why am I so unpopular?

[director] I think that's the reason why you have not planted your theory, your Western theory into the Chinese soil... You have heard of the story, the fight between Mao Zedong and his colleagues in the early days?.. It is that you are doing things that you think will help enormously, the organization. And probably it will. But you need the support of the people.

Different sides had different theories about the failure of the AD to develop as the “nerve center” even of the news operation, let alone the whole channel, in the manner laid out in the OSC blueprint. On the one hand, cooperation is not something that can be forced on people, so the Controller's hands were tied. On the other hand, his inability to intervene meant the situation had to resolve itself, and the existing institutional

arrangements and alignment of forces and relationships mitigated against any real change to the status quo in the editorial structure.

The woman appointed head of the assignment desk was an experienced executive producer who came to CCTV-9 after working for two renowned CCTV-1 shows, Focus (焦点访谈 ‘jiaodian fangtan’) and Oriental Horizon (东方时空 ‘dongfang shikong’). However, precisely because she came from established shows outside of CCTV-9, like me she was perceived as a threat to entrenched interests within the channel, yet paradoxically also not a threat, precisely because she also was an ‘outsider.’

The assignment desk floundered within the CCTV-9 system and never established a foothold. After only weeks, my own frustration at the growing resistance to anything more than token input into the news editing process from the assignment desk resulted in my abandoning the AD and asking to be re-assigned. Management agreed to release me, and voiced disappointment at my decision. However, fearful of backlash at what would amount to criticism of entrenched interests, I concealed from management the real reason for my leaving, instead putting it down to concern that my PhD research was being compromised.

In the months that followed, I watched as the AD desk was sidelined and eventually marginalized within the channel. By the time the time frame I had given myself for fieldwork ended in January 2005, the assignment desk, although still existing in name, had all but disappeared from the editorial process. In retrospect I believe I acted too hastily. I sometimes still wonder whether I would have made a difference had I stayed on the desk, although I suspect winning “the support of the people” was beyond me, given the institutional interest in maintaining the status quo.

To my mind, the failure of the channel to develop an assignment desk in the manner outlined in the OSC blueprint was a serious blow for the relaunch. If the relaunch



had pushed the channel towards realizing management's ambitions for a rolling news service, without an assignment desk the channel would lack the editorial mechanism necessary for servicing a rolling news service.

The six months the planning committee existed were an exhausting time not only for its members, but for everybody involved in the channel. Management and staff did their best to carry on with daily production for the existing 24-hour channel, even as they designed the programming, infrastructure and editorial system required to turn that broadcaster into an international standard rolling news channel.

In the end much was achieved, but most of that was in the form of *mise-en-scene* and did not influence the programming or editorial structure. Whether more of the original spirit of the blueprint could have been realized is debatable. In retrospect, perhaps too much emphasis was put on the date May 3, 2004 as a turning point in the development of CCTV-9. After all, the channel's development had been one of sustained evolution in the years since its launch in 2000, and the future does not rule out the more radical changes proposed for the 2004 relaunch.

Although Politburo member Li Changchun had triggered the relaunch and played a key role in its conceptualization through the instructions that framed its design, his role faded from consideration as the OSC blueprint was realized. Above all, what the relaunch showed was how difficult it is for even the highest levels of the Party to influence the development of media, when the interests of the authorities conflict with those of media makers themselves.

### **The origins of the relaunch**

Planning for the relaunch did not begin with either the OSC blueprint, or later the meetings of the planning committee. On the contrary, what has characterized CCTV-9's

development since September 2000, when it was split off as a channel separate from CCTV-4, is constant but uneven change. I have already traced the genesis of CCTV International to the ‘going out project’ launched in 2001. However, if a specific date was to apply to the transformation of CCTV-9 associated with the May 3, 2004 relaunch, that date would be a seminar hosted by CCTV on November 20, 2002, entitled “The Future of CCTV International (CCTV-9).”

Present at that seminar were:

- Mr. Zhao Huayong, President of CCTV
- Mr. Zhang Changming, Vice-President of CCTV
- Mr. Zhao Lifan, Deputy Chief Editor, CCTV
- Mr. Sheng Yilai, Director of the Overseas Service Center, CCTV
- Mr. Li Shushen, Deputy Director of Overseas Service, CCTV
- Mr. Jiang Heping, Controller, CCTV-9
- Ms. Ye Lulu, Deputy Controller, CCTV-9
- Mr. Tian Jin, Deputy Minister and Editor-In-Chief, SARFT
- Mr. Wang Guoqing, Deputy Director, Information Office, State Council
- Mr. Lu Mai, Director, Development Research Center of the State Council, P.R.C. and Secretary General, China Development Research Foundation
- Mr. Li Dan, President of *China Radio International* (CRI)
- Mr. Zhu Yinghuang, Editor-In-Chief, China Daily
- Mr. Liu Jianchao, Deputy Director General, Information Dept., Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. John Terenzio, Consultant to CCTV-9, News Corporation

From this list, the Party and government were clearly taking a keen interest in the development of CCTV-9 before Li Changchun’s instructions in September 2003 which

became the basis of the OSC blueprint for the relaunch. Although Li issued the instructions in the context of a visit to Latin America, repeating Xu Guangchun's earlier call in 2001 for the PRC to have its own CNN-style channel, Li's instruction was issued after the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

Both that war and the 9/11 attacks on the United States in September 2001 impressed upon the PRC government the power of a rolling news channel. On the mainland, CCTV's coverage of the 9/11 attacks was tentative compared to that of Hong-Kong based rival, Phoenix, earning the scorn of viewers and prompting acceleration of plans already in the pipeline for a domestic 24-hour news channel, formally launched on May 1, 2003 (Dong & Shi, 2007, pp. 183-184).

Held in November 2002, the seminar on the future of CCTV International should be seen in light of these developments. CCTV had already learned its lesson after 9/11, and CCTV-9 reported comprehensively on the invasion of Iraq, but it was hampered by its format as a comprehensive channel. It was in light of the constant stream of imagery from 9/11 and the US invasion on news channels that Li issued the instructions for the transformation of CCTV-9 into a rolling news channel. So, although the November 2002 seminar was ostensibly directed towards the May 2003 relaunch which did not tackle CCTV-9's status as a comprehensive channel, the coalition of interests concerned with developing CCTV-9 as a rolling news channel was already in place well before Li ordered the transformation of the channel.

Most importantly, as a rolling news channel CCTV-9 would remain subject to government control. The seminar shows the vertical and horizontal integration of CCTV-9 into the government's system of 'wai xuan' (external publicity). SARFT was represented by Tian Jin, who is in overall charge of the PRC's relationships with foreign media. The government was also represented by Wang Guoqing, Deputy Director of the

State Council Information Office, Liu Jianchao, Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs information department, and Lu Mai, head of a government think tank.

In terms of horizontal relationships, the Editor-in-Chief of *China Daily*, the state-controlled English-language newspaper that is the print equivalent of CCTV-9, and the president of *China Radio International*, the state-controlled broadcaster that is the radio equivalent of CCTV-9, were both present. The only major player missing from the seminar but included in the blueprint was *Xinhua*. Clearly CCTV International was being positioned to play a major role in ‘wai xuan.’ Moreover, the Party and government were interested to hear from News Corporation’s consultant his suggestions for development of the channel.

The consultant made clear that he thought the channel should be directed at the foreign audience, particularly overseas, and in particular at ‘opinion makers,’ and that seeking a mass audience (the target of a comprehensive channel) was the wrong approach for a channel that could at best have niche appeal, given the range of media available in countries like the United States. Whether the consultant influenced the development of the OSC blueprint is beyond doubt. I have already noted his input into the rationale and role of an assignment desk. His suggestion that the channel pay less attention to its existing audience, primarily Chinese seeking to learn English, and foreigners in the PRC lacking access to channels like CNN-I and the BBC-WS, and focus on winning access to opinion makers in target countries, fed into the emphasis in the OSC blueprint on developing a credible news channel, with an emphasis on objective, impartial and balanced reporting.

However, the OSC blueprint also showed the Party/State’s understanding of these terms:

Be objective, impartial and balanced, and in being objective, impartial and balanced, reflect the government's position and point of view.

体现客观，公正，平衡，在客观，公正，平衡中体现我国政府的立场观点。  
(CCTV, 2003c)

I have already noted (see p. 10) the non-contradiction from the Party/State's point of view that objective, impartial and balanced reporting in and of itself reflects the Party's and government's position. This is because the Party/State's discourse on its own legitimacy, represented by the aphorism "seek truth from facts" assumes that the Party and government already embody these values. As a result, media should reflect the Party's and government's position, since according to the logic governing the Party/State discourse on their own legitimacy, their point of view is by definition objective, impartial and balanced.

In other words, the Party/State was attempting to achieve through its instructions what the power structures in democratic countries with commercialized and public service broadcasting systems have achieved through the market and journalistic professionalism, legitimization of a discourse of objectivity, impartiality and balance for news that privileges the voices of politicians, government, and big business, to the effective exclusion of any substantive dissent from the status quo.

Bracketing the relationship between Party, government and media in the PRC, which I have addressed in the introduction and literature review, what I want to emphasize here is the negotiated character of the channel's development. To my mind, a typical mistake attending much analysis of the PRC governing system is to imagine the system in hierarchical terms with a top down flow of power that emphasizes the relatively greater ability of each ascending level of power to influence those below. While this is true with respect to the general theory of democratic centralism, which emphasizes the subordination of the subordinate unit to the superior unit within the power system, the

history of television, the contested character of mass line theory, and the push for reform from below, including from within media during the 1980s, all point to a rather more flexible and dynamic power system than one caricatured by conflating the ability of the Politburo to issue directives and leading Party and government organs to make policy with the negotiated character of policy implementation.

### **The May 2004 relaunch and editorial control**

Although, I have focused primarily on what was not achieved in the relaunch, failure to realize the OSC blueprint in its draft form paradoxically strengthened the channel's relative autonomy within the broader system of 'wai xuan.' Following the relaunch, the following was typical of what a number of staff told me:

[staff] Before May the 3rd, we were told CCTV-9 will be the China's CNN... we were told we should redesign our programs like that.

[Jirik] Do you like the way we do the news?

[staff] Not after May the 3rd.

[Jirik] What has changed?

[staff] We were told we cannot do some report.

[Jirik] What kind?

[zhubian] Bad things... Saying too much bad thing about China, like drug, AIDS, and also those economic issues, but for me, I think, sometimes I think it's understandable. Actually CCTV-9 is a channel which is just sending, I think is sending good signals to other people outside China, so that's why I think we may be redefine our function. It's not, I don't think it should be a kind of a news channel, it's like really promoting China, like we would just have Travelogue, we just have Rediscovering China, and telling some moving stories about Chinese people, and the beautiful scenery spots about China, things like that. I think that's enough.

This staff member's sense of depression was almost palpable. It was a reaction that was typical of journalists who had spent their time, in some cases their careers, at

CCTV-9 and its earlier incarnations developing news services. But what the Party/State had in mind with the relaunch was a channel that could compete with CNN's production values while functioning primarily as a publicity instrument, whenever the Party/State's interest was at stake in the story.

Journalists at CCTV-9 were uncomfortable with this. In the first few months after the relaunch, the channel did some interesting and hard hitting stories, opening its post-relaunch coverage of the PRC with a series China's Challenges (see p. 360), but respite was short:

[Jirik] Would you like to see more responsibility given to the people who make the news and not coming from outside?

[staff] Yeah, I think so, and also we do, we feel that this kind of control being loosed for a certain period of time, but recently I think that kind of control come back.

Nobody I interviewed at CCTV-9 was happy with this state of affairs:

[staff] Many people are very critical of the propaganda machines, not only this criticism comes from the journalists, journalists who compete with us [foreigners], but inside, even inside, you know, even inside the media organization, including some of the high ranking media bosses.

So, by failing to enthusiastically embrace the vision for the channel laid out by the OSC blueprint, not only did programming remain much the same, but the journalists in effect offered passive resistance to any shift in editorial values away from those that had come to define the development of the channel since its inception.

## **DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

### **Discussion**

What the relaunch at CCTV-9 shows above all is the manner in which power is negotiated in the PRC within specific institutions and at specific sites. Although one of

the most powerful people in the PRC, Politburo member Li Changchun, put his personal imprimatur on documents that were reflected in the blueprint produced by the OSC, the final outcome of the relaunch was quite different from that detailed in the first draft. What the process of relaunching CCTV-9 as CCTV International showed was how the weaker party in a negotiation can reconfigure the discourse of power to its own ends.

However, what I am not suggesting here is that CCTV-9 failed to fulfill demands put on them by the Party and government. On the contrary, CCTV-9 appropriated the language of those demands and reconfigured their meaning to suit the channel's purposes, convincing SARFT in the process that this new meaning was the appropriate one. Pan & Lu's (2003) and Pan's (2005) work on bounded innovation in PRC media reform goes some way to providing an explanation of this process.

In particular the notion within the concept of "bounded innovation" that media managers have a degree of relative autonomy in the implementation of policy was borne out by the relaunch of CCTV-9. The call for the channel to remain a "window on China" was turned against the strategic demands for change on the grounds that feature programming was the best way to keep a window on China open. Emphasizing 'soft' programming about the PRC also resonated with the broader strategy for the channel within the "going out project," in particular the demand to present a positive image of the PRC to the world, conducive to the country's development.<sup>90</sup> Given the failures as well as successes of the PRC's development, doubtlessly the Party/State would prefer a softer image of the PRC than one dictated exclusively by news and news oriented programming, especially as the PRC's journalists have increasingly shown in recent years their willingness to test the bounds of the permissible.

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<sup>90</sup> Comments made by CCTV Vice President Zhang Changmin on April 23, 2004 at the closing session of the annual "Rainbow Awards," for media involved in the PRC's 'wai xuan.'



Drawing on Certeau (1984), Pan & Lu (2003) “postulate that Chinese journalists use various discursive resources in their everyday practices as “tactics” to evade, appropriate, and resist controlling “strategies” imposed on them by those with power” (Lee, 2003a, p. 17). The behavior of production departments faced with changing work patterns, extra work at little to no extra pay, and in some cases job loss was typical of these kinds of tactics.

However, if Certeau’s (1984) insights into power give some idea of the weapons journalists in the PRC use to defend their positions against political authority, only by situating their struggles within the broader field of journalism as Bourdieu (2005a) understood it can an analysis of their overall effectiveness be made. The blueprint for the relaunch at CCTV-9 shows the embedded character of journalistic institutions in the PRC within a field that is traversed by power. As part of the PRC’s system of ‘wai xuan,’ CCTV-9 was subject to controls that are quite different from those operating in commercial and public service media systems.

Nevertheless, the partial and relative autonomy of CCTV-9 was obvious from the degree of resistance from within the channel to the OSC blueprint for the relaunch. Even the guidelines were framed as recommendation, not demands, despite their origin in instructions from a Politburo member. The OSC blueprint was almost apologetic in its framing of its recommendations:

Given the current conditions for the transformation of CCTV-9, the following guidelines can be considered.

在现行条件下对CCTV-9进行改版，可以考虑一下策略 (CCTV, 2003c)

In short, from the outset, the relaunch was open to negotiation, since it was CCTV and specifically CCTV-9, that would carry it out, and it was these institutions that were

best placed, not the Party or SARFT, to determine what could or could not be done with the resources allocated for the relaunch and within the given timeframe.

Keeping Features, despite the call for the axing of much of its programming in the original blueprint, was discursively re-positioned by CCTV-9 management as a ‘win-win’ for the Party/State and CCTV-9, put in a difficult position by the reluctance of potential partners like *Xinhua*, CRI and Shanghai TV to play the role allotted them in the blueprint, hampered by staff reluctance to change existing work patterns, and concerned at a re-orientation of the channel away from the achievements of the revamp in May, 2003.

Because of the competitive character of news in the PRC, any attempt to build an overarching publicity system, combining the joint efforts of institutions such as *Xinhua*, CRI and CCTV, was likely to meet opposition from within these institutions, as the experience of the relaunch of CCTV-9 indicated. In short, the outcome of the relaunch was the only possible outcome under the circumstances. Recognizing this, SARFT acknowledged the achievements of the relaunch and the channel moved on.<sup>91</sup>

## Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International on May 3, 2004. Against management’s public endorsement of the relaunch as a radical transformation of the channel, I have shown that little changed beyond the mise-en-scene and that the revamped channel bore little resemblance to the OSC blueprint prepared according to the “spirit of the instructions” (指示精神) from Politburo member, Li Changchun.

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<sup>91</sup> In mid-2005, SARFT rewarded CCTV-9’s Controller by promoting him to head CCTV-5, CCTV’s flagship sports channel, which was to be the host broadcaster for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

However, my analysis suggests that this did not indicate a failure of CCTV, OSC and CCTV-9 management to carry out instructions ‘from above.’ On the contrary, using Pan & Lu’s (2003) and Pan’s (2005) deployment of Certeau, and Bourdieu’s concept of field, the negotiated character of media reform is evident in the manner in which channel staff and management redeployed the discourse of the relaunch to their own ends.

Moreover, the relative autonomy of media management in implementing policy was clear from the leeway given the channel, when the blueprint presented its guidelines for “consideration” (可以考虑), rather than as demands. Faced with the reluctance of potential partners such as *Xinhua*, CRI and Shanghai TV to play the role allotted them, CCTV-9 was forced to rely on its own resources to a far greater degree than the blueprint had envisaged. In this situation, immense pressure was put on the programming departments, which, given the lack of incentive to take on extra work, or change their working style, resisted, especially as the relaunch pointed the channel away from many of the gains of an earlier revamp in May, 2003.

As a corollary of the passive resistance to change that characterized the process of re-negotiation of the blueprint, the editorial values of the channel also remained unchanged, despite the aim to strengthen the publicity character of the channel to the detriment of its news.

As a participant in elements of the planning and aspects of the realization of the relaunch, I was struck by the strength of resistance to change, which was understandable given the circumstances, but also surprising given the assumption in much of the literature about the top-down character of political authority in communist political economic systems. Against any easy assumption about the prerogatives of the Party/State, what was evident in the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International was not only the latitude media managers had in interpreting instructions and implementing

reform, but also the tactics the weak use in an uneven but definitely not one-sided struggle to co-opt power. In short, what the process of implementing the relaunch showed is that power is negotiated and cannot be assumed in the PRC.

Not surprisingly, where management did not face resistance were in those areas where the production departments saw the possibility for improvement in their conditions, such as in remodeled offices, a new newsroom and a new studio and sets, although as noted the latter proved to be less than inspiring.

## **Chapter 8: Editorial**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 7 I discussed the substantive changes to elements of the channel associated with the relaunch. But as noted, despite the dramatic overhaul of packaging associated with the relaunch, and the new sets, new newsroom and renovation of other work spaces, most of the programming, i.e. the ‘stuff’ of television, remained the same and the majority of staff remained in similar positions doing similar jobs. Despite an ambitious attempt to restructure the editorial system to better serve a rolling news channel, the editorial system remained largely unchanged.

Therefore rather than change characterizing CCTV-9, continuity was also clearly a key feature of the channel and worthy of investigation. I approach this topic through an analysis of editorial control in this chapter, and in the following chapter, the news production process, arguably the most important form of production at CCTV-9, given its aim to be a rolling news channel. I say arguably because the previous chapter has shown how important feature and soft magazine programming has been and remain for the channel, especially in its role in ‘wai xuan’ and as a ‘window on China.’ Nevertheless, if CCTV-9 is to develop as a competitor to the likes of CNN-I and BBC-WS, Al-Jazeera International et al., it will be its editorial values and news production that make possible the comparison.

This chapter opens with a description of the over-arching power of the Central Publicity Department in editorial, which distinguishes PRC media from media in countries where legal systems protect journalists from overt political interference. I discuss editorial control at CCTV-9 and the different constraints operating on news makers at different levels within the news production system. I look at the editorial

hierarchy within which CCTV-9 is imbricated and the external constraints on news production associated with the censorship and regulatory functions of the CPD and SARFT respectively. I then analyze the editorial structure within CCTV-9 showing the relative weights of authority within each level of the structure. Finally I address the regime of self-censorship which characterizes news making at CCTV-9 and I discuss how news makers negotiate editorial control.

This chapter is the first of three that deal with elements of the research question:

- How did news makers at CCTV-9 negotiate control over news making in their day to day work?

The intermediate question and subordinate questions this chapter addressed were as follows:

- How did the editorial system at CCTV-9 work?
  - What was the structure of the editorial system at CCTV-9?
  - Who controlled the news at CCTV-9?
  - How did control function on a day-to-day basis in the newsroom?
  - What was the role of the CPD and SARFT in editorial control at CCTV-9?
  - How did news makers negotiate external editorial control?

## **GENERAL NEWS & THE EDITORIAL SYSTEM AT CCTV-9**

### **General news**

Although I talked briefly about the overall programming structure at CCTV-9 in the previous chapter, in this chapter and those that follow I restrict myself to discussion of the general news section and the reporters' group which supplied stories for general news, since general news was considered to be the 'flagship' output of the channel. In

addition to its own resources and those of the reporting group, general news, which was responsible for CCTV News, News Updates and World Wide Watch,<sup>92</sup> could also access and air stories produced by the specialist news sections – Asia Today, Biz China, Culture Express and Sports. The importance of general news is clear from the description of CCTV News from the OSC blueprint, which can be compared with the substantively similar descriptions provided in the publicity materials in Appendix 7, indicating the continuity over time in internal understanding of this program:

Comprehensive news program CCTV News: CCTV's branded flagship news program. 30 minutes. Broadcast at the top of every hour. A timely and rolling broadcast of major domestic and international affairs; in addition to broadcasting major international stories, Chinese and Asian News are an important component. Utilizing self-cover and in-depth reporting, etc., it reflects Chinese perspective.

综合新闻 CCTV NEWS: 带有中央电视台标识的主打综合新闻栏目。时长30分钟。在每个正点播出。及时，滚动播出国内国际大事；除在第一时效播出国际大事外，中国和亚洲新闻为中要组成部分。利用自采新闻，深度报道等体现中国视角。(CCTV, 2003c)

### **The editorial system at CCTV-9**

The general news was structured and its practices governed by the editorial system at CCTV9. The core characteristic of the editorial system was its imbrication in the 'wai xuan' system of the Party/State, which set the channel off from commercial and public service broadcasters in other countries that are not state-controlled or protected by charter. In the case of non-state-controlled commercial broadcasters the relationship of media and the political economy is mediated through the market with regulatory oversight (if any exists) trusted to government agencies. In the case of state-controlled public service broadcasters, the media-government relationship is mediated by a charter,

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<sup>92</sup> Before the relaunch, general news also produced a 15-minute daily bulletin of news with an Asian regional focus.

such as is the case with the BBC, or analogous arrangement. In the case of the PRC, news systems are formally rather than informally part of the system of governance, hence their stated as opposed to unstated ‘mouthpiece’ role, the latter being more the case with commercial and public service broadcasters in mainstream Western news systems where media are legislatively separated from the political sphere, but still serve power.

At CCTV-9, the editorial system has a number of mechanisms that ensure the Party/State ‘line’ is followed in broadcasts. These mechanisms range from the formal to the informal. The key formal mechanism is the editorial system. The key informal mechanism is self-censorship as a corollary of the newsroom editorial system, and associated with this, socialization into the routines of newsroom practice (“learning the ropes”).

### **The editorial structure at CCTV and CCTV-9**

The editorial structure at CCTV-9 is part of the broader editorial system within which CCTV is embedded, the ‘wai xuan’ system of which CCTV-9 is a key part. The president of CCTV was in regular contact with SARFT (a once weekly meeting at SARFT according to staff at CCTV-9) and other government departments as needed. Early each Monday morning, the president and vice presidents of CCTV met to discuss major issues that would be in the news that week. Following that an expanded meeting was held, bringing department heads (of channels, the technical section, etc.) into the picture. In the case of CCTV-9, that meant the Controller, who reported to the head of the Overseas Service Center, who reported to one of CCTV’s Vice Presidents. Once that meeting had taken place, departmental heads met with section leaders, and finally a channel-specific editorial meeting was held. In the case of CCTV-9 the channel-wide meeting was on Tuesday afternoon, when the previous week’s work was discussed, and



any information relayed that had filtered down from the Monday morning meeting between the heads of CCTV.

The place of CCTV-9 within the ‘wai xuan’ system within which it is embedded is shown in Figure 3. This hierarchy reflects the system of democratic centralism that defines the relationships of governance in the PRC. Each successive level is subordinate to the authority of that preceding it. Each lower level also has a role in synthesizing and passing to each higher level the consensus of the impact of policy on everyday life. In the case of media institutions, this function is called media supervision, although CCTV-9 was largely denied that role because of its function in ‘wai xuan.’

Figure 3: The position of CCTV-9 within the ‘wai xuan’ editorial hierarchy

1. Politburo Standing Committee (Li Changchun – oversees publicity)
2. Central Publicity Department (CPD) (internal publicity) (Head, Liu Yunshun, also a Politburo Member, but not a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, therefore outranked in the Party hierarchy by Li Changchun)<sup>93</sup>
3. State Council Information Office (external publicity)
4. SARFT (Minister Wang Taihua, concurrently Deputy Head of the CPD, Vice Minister Tian Jin)
5. CCTV (President Zhao Huayong)
6. CCTV Vice President (Zhang Changmin)
7. Overseas Service Center (Director, Sheng Yilai)
8. CCTV-9 (Controller, Jiang Heping)

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<sup>93</sup> For an excellent overview of the publicity structure in the CCTV, see Brady (2006), on whose work this list is in part based.

I have given names for the leaders of particular organizations, because of the personal nature of power in the PRC. I have already discussed the role of guanxi in the system of governance in the PRC, including in media (see p.141). With respect to the news editorial system, information moved extremely rapidly and fluidly through formal networks of authority and informal guanxi networks within the formal networks. If anybody within the editorial system was unsure about how to proceed with a story, a phone call to a higher authority would quickly return a reply, even if the higher level had to go further up the chain of editorial responsibility. Similarly a phone call from 'higher up' would quickly revise or kill a story.

As an example, in October 2003 CCTV-9 planned to broadcast live the address of President Hu Jintao to the Australian Parliament. However, just before the speech, the broadcast was cancelled. A similar cancellation prevented CCTV-9 from broadcasting President Hu speaking live in France in January 2004. Staff and management had different explanations for the problem:

[Jirik] Twice we tried to do live coverage of Hu Jintao, once in France, once in Australia. Twice we had it set up and all ready to go. Both times it was cancelled. What is the problem here?

[staff] I believe someone higher than CCTV, maybe they wrote a report, and originally they agree that you can broadcast, and then later they found there might be some Falungong, or anti-Hu Jintao sentiments, around Hu, so finally they would cancel.

[Jirik] So what is the Party and the government afraid of?

[staff] It's hard to answer. There are open minds who say you can get freedom in reporting events, live events. But then when it comes in reality, you have to face reality, which might put yourself in a chaos situation. You have everything set up, and then someone very close to the top leader says "This time we are not ready, let's wait for the next."

[Jirik] Why did the attempt to cover President Hu Jintao's speeches in Australia and France in the parliament, why did they not go ahead.

[management] For technical reasons. The signal was abruptly blurred. When we do that sort of coverage, we must guarantee the quality of the signal.

[Jirik] There was some talk that the CPPCC, in the case of Australia, the CPPCC Chairman actually told us not to do it at the very last moment.

[management] The CPPCC Chairman?

[Jirik] Accompanying Hu Jintao on his visit.

[management] No. It's simply for the sake of safety of the signal.

Although I am skeptical about management's explanation,<sup>94</sup> to their credit, they were as disconsolate as the staff about the cancellations. After CCTV-9 broadcast live US Vice President Dick Cheney's address to students at Fudan University in Shanghai in April 2004, the irony of the situation was not lost on CCTV-9 management, who lamented that viewers were more likely to see the US president than the PRC president live on CCTV-9.

The channel was constrained by an editorial system that is a part of the Party/State's publicity system, what He Zhou (2000c) calls "Party Publicity Inc." This system emphasizes that media are publicity instruments for the Party/State in a manner similar to the media management role a communications department plays within a large company. In the words of senior management at CCTV-9:

The general principle we have to, we cannot do anything about anything that cause instability within the country, and we cannot say anything against the Communist Party, against the Central Government. That's the taboo, because we

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<sup>94</sup> As a television news producer at Reuters responsible for daily satellite 'feeds' around the Asian region, the kind of "abruptly blurred" signal referred to here was unlikely out of Australia, which has generally reliable feed capabilities. Blurred signals were commonplace however in some parts of Asia. When I tried to feed an interview with Myanmar's Aung San Suukyi out of Myanmar State TV in July 1995 after she was briefly released from house arrest, I was told by the receiving end at Reuters in London that the signal had suddenly become blurred and would be unusable. Myanmar State TV appeared to be interfering with the outgoing signal. This would not have happened in Australia.

are a subsidiary organization of the Central Government. Who is my boss? Right? The government is our boss, yeah.

Editorial control from sources external to CCTV-9 involved a mixture of instructions ‘from above’ within CCTV and prohibitions from SARFT or the CPD in the form of instructions (see below, p. 276). On a day-to-day basis, the Central Publicity Department (CPD) and *Xinhua* were the final authorities on what could or could not be reported by CCTV-9. Once the CPD put an injunction on reporting a story, that story could no longer be aired until the ban was lifted. Once *Xinhua* reported a story, CCTV-9 could report it without fear of recrimination.<sup>95</sup> In addition, CCTV-1 and CCTV-4 were also considered reliable sources. CCTV-1 was considered more authoritative than CCTV-4, but not as authoritative as *Xinhua*, which is an institution directly under the State Council. One staff member put it this way: “[If we] follow whatever CCTV 1 or CCTV 4, what they’re doing, that’s okay, we just don’t have to worry all those producing good programs. You just translate them. That’s okay, one hundred percent we are safe, right!” Sensitive stories not sourced from either *Xinhua*,<sup>96</sup> or CCTV-1 or CCTV-4<sup>97</sup> represented more of a grey area for editorial that required decision-making within the channel from the level of writer and reporter up to Controller on their suitability for broadcast.

Despite the threat of external intervention that hung over the heads of management, most editorial decisions both about what to report and what not to report were taken within the channel. Although the CCTV-9 Controller was at the bottom of a

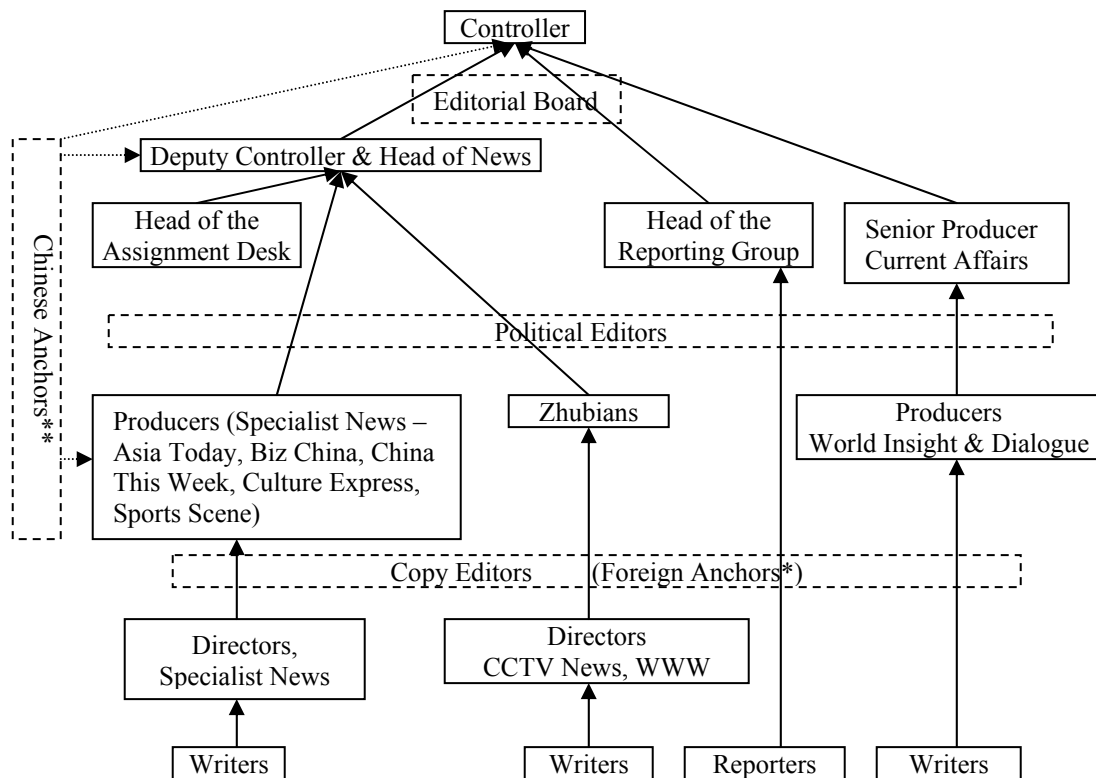
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<sup>95</sup> Occasionally even this rule of thumb failed. When former CPC General Secretary Zhao Ziyang died in January 2005 having lived under house arrest since his removal during the Tiananmen incident, CCTV-9 was ordered not to report it, although *Xinhua* had issued a statement recording his passing. Management told me they found this kind of injunction depressing.

<sup>96</sup> Or the CPC newspaper *People’s Daily*, although source analysis of content indicated *People’s Daily* was not a significant news source at CCTV-9 (see Chapter x).

<sup>97</sup> CCTV-4 sometimes also proved unreliable (see p. 275 for discussion of the Beslan incident).

hierarchy of editorial power within the ‘wai xuan’ system, responsibility for what went to air on CCTV-9 nevertheless stopped with him. Figure 4 shows the hierarchy of editorial responsibility within CCTV-9. At each level within the channel a person would take as much responsibility as they are willing to assume, seeking guidance from above when in



\* Foreign anchors were hired on contract or as ‘foreign experts’ and formally had the same status and authority as copy editors.

\*\* Chinese anchors were ranked by seniority and reported to their corresponding level.

doubt, and providing guidance below when asked.

Figure 4: CCTV-9 hierarchy of editorial control by reporting line

Within this structure, writers<sup>98</sup> had little lee-way in how to deal with stories, with the producers and zhubians taking responsibility for their work. On sensitive issues, writers would be told how to handle a story. In addition, directors would often limit writers' options by restricting source material from which they could work. "For politically sensitive issues we will not turn to Reuters," is how one zhubian described the emphasis on sourcing stories with a domestic or foreign policy angle from sources like *Xinhua*.<sup>99</sup> Directors had inordinate power within the news making system, a problem I discuss below (see p. 268). Moreover, they were not held responsible for programs to the degree producers and zhubians were. The reporting group had its own dynamics, which I address in Chapter 10: Reporting.

Moving up the reporting line, copy editors and foreign anchors had the same formal powers and status. They were subject to the authority of the producers or zhubians for the shows for which they were copy editing or anchoring, but they did not have a formal reporting line within the Chinese human resources system (hence the broken lines surrounding the box). The Chinese anchors were ranked by seniority and reported to the corresponding level of management within the editorial system.

As the 'face' of CCTV-9, the anchors had a form of 'representational' capital (in the sense that Bourdieu would use the term) that increased their value, beyond their formal status. Although the best of the anchors were extremely professional news people, who had come to anchoring through mastering the craft of news making, the status associated with anchoring was out of proportion to the 'talking head' function that constituted the bulk of their work, since anchoring is above all a performance art that has

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<sup>98</sup> Although reporters were technically at the same level as writers, because they were part of a separate team, whose leader reported directly to the Controller, they had somewhat greater control over their work than did writers, who were subject to a greater series of checks on their work. In addition, reporters did not face the problem of sources setting the news agenda, which I discuss below (see p. 268).

<sup>99</sup> For a discussion of the role of source materials in shaping the news, see Chapter 11: Content.

become institutionalized within television news as a way of branding a channel or show for the audience.<sup>100</sup> Of my interviewees, anchors seemed to enjoy their work most. As a form of performance, anchoring almost guaranteed feedback. As one Chinese anchor noted, “I often hear people telling me that they like my shows, foreigners especially in Beijing that I meet. You see, that’s the big rewarding part.”

The best anchors worked extremely hard to bring credibility to the position. As the public face of the channel, they also had the invidious role of reading news they knew was less than the full story:

[Jirik] How do you feel as the public face of the channel, the person who actually reads the news, if you know that this system is structured as to actually deny the public access to the information they need?

[anchor] I feel uncomfortable, but I don’t feel totally shameful, because when people are watching us, they know that this is China, China is changing, but not to a way that is that open, that is that more democratic, that is that ideal. So, just when you look at North Korea TV, he is not representing the South, he is representing the image, the practical situation of North Korea, so anything that you saw China, the limitations, that media can do, is the practical physical situation of China, that’s it.

If the role of the anchor is to brand the channel, the persons on whom most responsibility fell for getting the news to air were the producers and zhubians. They took great pride in their programs and in taking responsibility for them, without recourse to seeking advice from above. When I asked them what degree of control they exercised over story choice, the answer consistently was a high degree, although this self-understanding of their work ignored the small pool of sources (see p. 319) from which they were drawing stories, and their dependency on these sources:

[Jirik] how much choice do you have in story choice?

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<sup>100</sup> For a discussion of the role of anchoring at CCTV, see Pugsley & Gao (2007). I personally think television news would be better off without anchors, and possibly without reporters, the route taken by Euronews with its ground-breaking program, ‘No Comment’ (see Carvajal, 2007).

[zhubian] We have pretty much, I think. Because as long as we come up with a good idea, it will all be approved.

[Jirik] Okay, so on the one hand, you get people telling you to come and do this. On the other hand you can choose stories?

[zhubian] Right. And sometimes if the story is really really minor, and not interesting, then we can just kill them, and we don't need to report.

[Jirik] Can you refuse to do a story that the government tells you to do?

[zhubian] I don't think so.

[Jirik] Do you get directives on how to report? Like a certain thing you're told you have to take this position.

[zhubian] Well they will give us suggestions about what they think is good about it, and the significance of certain events, and how they think about it, and then we'll just tell them according to our audience, and what they are interested in, and how we can tell. And what are the interesting aspects to the foreign audience. Yeah.

Above the zhubians and producers were the political editors. Although technically the zhubian had the final say on a story and could in theory overrule a political editor, this rarely happened, and only happened if the political editor consented to the change the zhubian wanted to make. Like the copy editors and foreign anchors, the political editors had no formal position within the reporting lines of the Chinese Human Resources system (hence the broken line in the diagram). The political editors were former journalists who were hired by CCTV-9 to ensure copy did not include political mistakes. They were extremely experienced journalists and during my time at CCTV-9 were retirees from *Xinhua*, *China Radio International* and CCTV.

Above the political editors were management and senior management, jointly represented by the Editorial Board, which had eight members: Controller; Deputy Controller (Head of News); Deputy Controller (Head of Features); Deputy Controller (Head of Personnel); Head of the Assignment Desk; Senior Producer, Current Affairs;



Head of the Reporters' Group; Head of the Anchors' Group. The Editorial Board met about once a month, or more often as needed, and set editorial policy for the channel as a whole.

At the top of the CCTV-9 editorial structure were the Controller and Deputy Controller (Head of News). Both were considered excellent news editors, as was the Controller's immediate superior, who was head of the Overseas Service Center. The latter two were also credited with changing the channel from a sleepy operation responsible for three recorded bulletins of news a day a decade ago into the current 24-hour operation:

[staff] When I started working at CCTV, we have only 15 minutes of news. I get up in the morning to play badminton, and then I have a huge lunch and then I sleep till 3 o'clock, and then I finish work by 8.30 pm, and I work 4 days a week. So that was workload. Now I work night shifts. I work day shifts. I have extra work. And the program is 24 hours. You only have 1 o'clock news which is a repetition of 12, and every hour is brand new. So this is like only nine years. And when I started, CCTV English News Service is like the day before yesterday's events, it's not news. When [Controller], [Head of the OSC] arrived, they changed this.

But as the Controller's has risen within the CCTV system, some staff reflected that he had been forced to become more cautious, more of a manager, less of a 'newsman': "[w]hen he was a smaller leader with a smaller group, and he would do most of his time staying in the newsroom. But where is he now? Most of his time is connecting relations upstairs, and only criticism people. This is not good."

However, there was also defense of his position:

[Jirik] So, is [the Controller] under a lot of pressure?

[staff] I think he must be under a lot of pressure. When he's doing something he's weighing which is the more important, keeping his position here, and upgrading it, or making the news value, and making some really good stories. Every day he's struggling, he's under great pressure. So far I have found that he is handling this well. But the easiest way for most of the officials, not like [CCTV-9

Controller], I have to say, is just to obey, and not do anything, and not make any changes.

In recent years editorial control has gradually been shifting more in the favor of news makers, and away from external agencies such as the CPD and SARFT. Management and staff saw this as a significant gain for news and for the professionalism of reporting. For example, when a bridge collapsed at Miyun outside Beijing in early February 2004, killing 37, senior management immediately sent a crew to cover the story, only informing their superiors within CCTV, rather than asking their permission.

Although reporting disasters in the PRC is becoming commonplace, news editors and journalists have had to fight hard in recent years to win even this limited opening, which is not at all guaranteed. In November 1999, when a ferry sank off the coast of Yantai in Shandong Province in the worst maritime disaster on record in the PRC, a reporter at CCTV-9's predecessor, the CCTV English News, requested permission to cover the story, but was denied permission to travel. One manager noted the change:

I think now [2004] in China, personally I feel we are much much better than one or two years before. We can report almost everything negative or positive, like you know the Huairo accident [Miyun bridge accident]. More than 37 people died because of the crowded audience. We send our journalists at midnight, and by early morning, we reported the footage. This is impossible two years earlier.

However, with the Beijing Olympics fast approaching, the CPD is again pressuring media to stay away from disaster stories, banning for example all but *Xinhua* from reporting on a bridge collapse in August 2007 in Fenghuang, Hunan Province, that killed at least 64 people (Anon., 2007a). Commentators have noted that in the context of the upcoming Olympics, the relaxation control cycle (see p. 46) that has characterized the PRC's media reform may well be swinging towards greater control, although by some measures the evidence is mixed.

On January 1, 2007 the government lifted some restrictions on foreign reporters as part of its preparations for the 2008 games. But, as veteran editor Li Datong<sup>101</sup> noted: “The Communist Party policy always is to loosen up outside but tighten inside” (Liu, 2007). Li may be right, but I would argue that any attempt to shrink the editorial space managers and reporters have won for themselves will only strengthen journalists’ resolve and resistance to push ahead with reform, even if the struggle remains largely invisible.

As I noted in the previous chapter, the blueprint for the May 3, 2004 relaunch attempted to redefine what was news more towards what management and staff at CCTV-9 considered publicity. Resistance to the relaunch at least stalled that attempt, although future development of the channel may yet take editorial in the direction that Li Changchun wanted (see Chapter 12: Conclusion).<sup>102</sup>

### **Day-to-day control in the newsroom**

Given that final editorial responsibility for CCTV-9 lay with the Controller, the Party/State through its agents in the CPD and SARFT only intervened in the news editorial system when a sensitive story broke between editorial meetings. As well as the weekly Tuesday meeting noted above (p.253), CCTV-9 had two daily editorial meetings. For the most part, the weekly and daily editorial meetings sufficed to establish what would be news on any given day. Within the channel, everyone from management down

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<sup>101</sup> In January 2006, Li Datong was fired from his post as Editor of the China Youth Daily supplement Freezing Point, and Freezing Point was suspended after Li openly criticized government media policy as intrusive, and his magazine published an article by historian Yuan Weishi about political bias in PRC history textbooks.

<sup>102</sup> In late 2007, a CCTV staffer told me the following: “To some extent, I think these years the freedom of media environment is not loosening, on the contrary it is tightening... President Zhang of CCTV says we should better not to do stories of anti-corruption of the Party during the [17th] Party Congress [in 2007]. I was so surprised and could not understand. The whole congress is about party building and corruption is as President Hu mentioned death and life for the party... Zhang also says CCTV-9 and 4 [the international Mandarin language channel] do not have the mission of media supervision. Its mission is to ‘publicize China, rather than publicize outside’.”

was aware of or soon learned through painful experience (see Chapter 10: Reporters) what could or could not be reported. Outside of the weekly and daily meetings, the routinization of news making ensured the political reliability of the broadcast.

Routinization of the daily broadcasts began with the daily editorial meetings, which brought together the Deputy Controller in charge of news, the on-duty zhubian, the specialist news producers, and a member of the assignment desk, who had attended the latest editorial meeting at News Center, the centralized news making operation at CCTV that is responsible for *Xinwen Lianbo*.

The report from News Center set the tone for the important stories of the day. After that, the Deputy Controller would relay any new instructions on reporting, the zhubian would report on general news, and each program producer as well as the head of the reporting group would outline their plans for the day. Once the meetings agreed on the news for the upcoming cycle, no changes would be made to the plans for coverage of leading stories, unless a major story broke and forced its way into the bulletin. However, in line with the channel's commitment to rolling news, minor adjustments were made to the lineup throughout the day, as non-sensitive incoming stories from News Center, CCTV-4 and the agencies were slotted into the lineup to update existing stories, or to introduce new stories.

### ***Roles of the zhubian and director***

The responsibility of editorial oversight of news making at the operational level fell to the zhubian and the director, who oversaw the assembly of all editions of general news that occurred on their shift. The equivalent position of the zhubian at the BBC is that of Editor of the Day, the person responsible during their shift for the overall operation of the news system (Schlesinger, 1987, pp. 137, 156).

The zhubians were effectively senior producers with a trusted record of service at CCTV-9. During their shift they were responsible for monitoring the news for new stories and for updates on running stories, agreeing the lineup with the director, and checking the quality of the stories before they went to air. In addition, in the absence of any secretarial support, the zhubians were responsible for a raft of non-editorial duties ranging from arranging for staff without accreditation to enter the CCTV compound to ensuring the right number of lunches and dinners were ordered for each shift from the canteen. Following is how two zhubians described a typical day's work:

We try to arrange everything about the daily work. And we will have several meetings every day to decide the topics, or the stories, the main stories of the day. I mean to select some of them. And then we have to go over the pictures. Sometimes also go over the scripts of the stories. And also try to coordinate between different departments and between different staffs including foreign experts.

Today I should be morning shift, so I start working at 8 o'clock in the morning. First I had a meeting with some other staffs from other, I mean the news center's staff, to listen about what kind of topics they've collected from different sources, and then get these topics back, we have our own department meeting to have a short discussion, and to assign the work out, and then I will help the directors to go over the run down of the programs, and also to go over the pictures of every story, and also answering phone calls, like picking up the interns, or like the foreign expert who can't have a pass into CCTV. And if there is some audience, they also call to our office, and have all different kind of questions. So we have to answer all questions about that.

The extra-editorial role of the zhubians somewhat curtailed their ability to carry out their editorial duties:

[Jirik] Okay, are there things you have to do, which you think you shouldn't do? That somebody else should do?

[zhubian] I think, because, like picking up some of the persons into the station, or like answering some phone calls of the audience, because not all the phone calls we have to answer. Some of them call us how to read a word, or when is your broadcasting. When is the show time of your program. So that kind of stuff, I

think maybe secretaries could take over them. Answering some unimportant phone calls, and also some times, I can think of a few things now.

[Jirik] You said coordination was a problem.

[zhubian] Coordination is a problem. Post production, new gathering, how they cooperate, and how can editors do their editing job in a proper way... News editors [zhubians], they have less time to do news editing. They are, I am often, often engaged in these phone calls, meaningless phone calls, and picking up interns at the East gate, and handing directions from the boss to the staff, irrelevant to news decision making.

Moreover, with the May 2004 relaunch, several zhubians expressed a great deal of frustration at what they saw as the growing inability of the editorial system to deal with the pressure being put on it to service rolling news.

[Jirik] Then, who's in charge of the news?

[zhubian] Nobody. Actually, I think it's confused me at the very beginning ... after May the 3rd, which means we started our new program, our new schedule, I just confused. I don't know why. And people just think it's totally nobody control the situation, it's just out of control, nobody take care of the program, I don't know why...

[Jirik] What about the other producers, do they feel like you [depressed and confused after the relaunch], as far as you know?

[zhubian] Yes, I think so... They will just keep working but not enthusiastically like before, I mean just to finish the work, and make sure there's no severe problems happens, no bad mistakes take place, so that's it.

[Jirik] When you're working is that a big problem, that you're only concern is that you don't make a mistake, is that like become the biggest issue?

[zhubian] Yes, I think so.

[Jirik] Do you care about the news anymore?

[zhubian] Yeah, sometimes just, what you can care is the most important thing, but what we think is the most important thing now is just make sure you don't make mistake...

Rather than feeling empowered as a result of the relaunch, this zhubian had lost confidence in their ability to intervene in the news making process, which had taken on the even more of the characteristics of a locomotive underway under its own momentum now that CCTV-9 was functioning as a rolling news channel. At best the zhubians could hope not to be crushed beneath its wheels.

As a result and despite the daily editorial meetings, rather than the news reflecting pro-active planning and news gathering, CCTV-9 remained entrenched in a culture of reactive news editing. The news agenda was being set by news sources, in particular CCTV-1 and the international news agencies (see p. 320). Under these circumstances, the zhubian and director were reduced to choosing from available materials stories that would go to air, despite their nominal authority within the editorial system.

Technically, the role of the director was to organize the production of each news bulletin during their shift under supervision of the zhubian. However, at CCTV-9 the heavy dependence on third party material (see p. 319) effectively shifted the decision over what new stories to include in the lineup to the sources, which the zhubian and director monitored for developments on running stories and breaking stories.

Moreover, because the director was physically present in the newsroom, he or she had control over the bulletin in a manner that the zhubian did not, partly because of the latter's physical isolation from the writers, and partly because of the relatively greater number of connections to the production process the director had, compared to the zhubian (for more on this, see p. 316). However, the spatial disorganization of the news making process could be overcome if the zhubian and director had a good working relationship:

[Jirik] What is the relationship between the zhubian and the director in terms of choosing what goes on the bulletin?

[director] They can change, basically we have been communicating to one another quite a lot. And normally they change a little. But it depends, maybe you know for [name] she's a very diligent [zhubian] you mean, and probably she will change quite a bit. It depends.

[Jirik] What about you, what do you feel a good director has to have?

[director] You know, because I'm working on the rolling news service, basically I just update is the most important thing, and once a story, you know comes up, I just organize everything.

Although the director and zhujian were responsible for choosing which stories to air, other staff from the writers up had a say in how each story was shaped.

### ***Role of the writers***

The writers at CCTV-9 ranged in expertise from interns with no knowledge of how to make news prior to their arrival at the channel to experienced personnel, who for reasons of their own had chosen not to try to move up the professional pecking order to become reporters. In my judgment, the best of the writers were as good as any personnel I encountered during my time at NBC and Reuters. They were professional journalists who took care and pride in their work. They were also acutely aware of the constraints under which they labored, in a manner largely absent from newsrooms where personnel labor under the shibboleth of editorial independence, seemingly oblivious to the diverse forces shaping their work:

[Jirik] What is most important for you in your job?

[writer] Getting the story right.

[Jirik] And how do you feel when you watch your work come back on the screen, when you think you've done a good job?

[writer] I feel, I do not feel very much about my work.

[Jirik] You don't feel pleasure?



[writer] Not pleasure, but you know, when you write a story, you just have, it's not writing after all I think, it's editing from different sources of news gathering. So, more specifically I think it's, it's the judgment of my own reason and sense, I think that's the most important.

[Jirik] Do you think that either [Controller] or [Deputy Controller] are actually good managers?

[writer] They're not managers, they're just a middle level official.

[Jirik] ... If they're not managers, who's managing?

[writer] Who is managing? I think it's um... The orders from above manage the system.

[Jirik] So within the whole system, even at the level of [Controller], you're saying that he has very little autonomy?

[writer] Right, and maneuver, to do, to maneuver.

### ***Role of the copy editors***

In the processing of each story, directly above the writers and reporters were the copy editors, for the most part native English speakers, who were hired by CCTV-9 as 'foreign experts.' However, like the writers themselves, the foreign experts working at CCTV-9 ranged from university students and graduates attracted to Beijing but with no previous news experiences through to seasoned news professionals. The role of the copy editor was to massage the written English of the writers and reporters, who were often working with Reuters and Associated Press scripts or translating from Chinese scripts from CCTV-1 and CCTV-4, into natural spoken English for broadcast. Copy editors would also voice stories written by Chinese who had not passed a voice-over test, and were therefore prohibited from voicing their own stories. This meant copy editors in effect took public credit for others' work, and in some cases attached their names to

stories with which they disagreed.<sup>103</sup> The more capable ‘foreign experts’ also played a role in shaping stories through discussion with the writers about story angles, or simply through re-writing sloppy copy, which was sometimes not appreciated by the writers,<sup>104</sup> but usually improved their work. Following is a typical description by a copy editor of their work:

I edit the copy, I basically polish the copy when it comes through from the Chinese writers, and try and improve on the English, and improve on the story, and then voice over certain stories if they ask us to. I also try and give a little bit of guidance to the writers, which goes beyond the scope of just grammar. It goes into journalistic fields, how and how not to report facts, and how to check up on facts. We write headlines, and we go through the lineups and we write links. We abuse [laughs] the people who do the shoulder boxes, because they are generally pretty awful.

Given the ‘wai xuan’ function of the channel, the more experienced the foreign copy editor or the better their Chinese, which gave them access to Chinese-language sources, the more likely he or she was to encounter frustration in massaging stories that dealt with sensitive topics. Although PRC media operate without a legal and professional code of conduct, intentional falsification of news by journalists in major PRC media is probably no more prevalent than in mainstream Western media.<sup>105</sup> However, PRC media often have no way of checking whether sources are falsifying stories. The mishandling of the SARS scandal, when media dutifully repeated government lies about the disease,

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<sup>103</sup> Copy editors were allowed to refuse to voice stories with which they disagreed. But during my time at CCTV-9, only one copy editor (not me) consistently did this. The others, including me, would rail against the stories, yet still attach their names to them.

<sup>104</sup> “You piss me off,” is what one writer with whom I had particularly poor relations angrily told me in front of the entire newsroom after I corrected a mistake in her script. This kind of public confrontation between writers and copy editors was rare. For the most part resentment simmered, but rarely came to the boil.

<sup>105</sup> The staggering attention to the alleged corruption of Chinese journalists in Western news stories about the PRC is in stark contrast to the actual evidence of fabrication. The celebrated ‘cardboard bun’ story of July 2007 (Blanchard, 2007), in which a Beijing TV journalist was charged with fabricating a story about adding cardboard to steamed buns as filler seems to be the exception, not the norm. For a discussion of the professionalism of journalists and the pride they take in their work and ‘getting the story right’, see Pan (2005) and Dong & Shi (2007).

occurred prior to my arrival in Beijing in 2003 (for an analysis of the SARS cover-up, see Sun, 2004). What does get written “is also very much affected by paid journalism” (Anon., 2007c) when a reporter will take money to either do or not do a story or shape it in a particular way (Chou Wiest, 2004).

Where PRC media fail is not in falsification but in the partiality of their reporting, due to issues like institutional constraints on coverage and paid journalism.<sup>106</sup> The CPD and/or SARFT can forbid reporting on sensitive issues or journalists practice self-censorship by scrupulously telling only the government’s side of the story, without any reference to any other side. My own frustrations at this practice occasionally got the better of me and resulted in heated exchanges with management and political editors. However, in general the copy editors were ambivalent about their role at CCTV-9:

[Jirik] Are you happy at CCTV-9?

[copy editor] I have been very happy, I’ve noticed myself in the last few months getting more and more grouchy, or losing my temper quicker in the newsroom, put it that way. I think I’ve been getting, I think I just need a break from it. I am happy overall. I love the flexibility of the job. I love it allowing me to be here. I love my colleagues. And I still get a certain kick out of rushing towards the end of a bulletin, to do a story, to do a lineup, and headlines. I do enjoy this. But I find myself getting increasingly frustrated at the limits that are imposed on us. And the lack of progress that is made.

[Jirik] What do you mean by limits?

[copy editor] The censorship limits. The limits that the chief [political] editors and the powers that be impose when they just are not willing to take any little, I mean it’s their job not to, but it’s our job to try and push it a little bit I think, and it’s just a continual conflict of interests, and it’s frustrating, and also when, for example yesterday, when Culture Express we carried, I think it was three, four, I think maybe even five stories of concerts around China, commemorating Deng

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<sup>106</sup> This dissertation does not deal with corruption. CCTV-9’s general news section, in so far as most of its work was handling third party material, was not in a position to practice paid journalism. The head of the reporters’ group made clear to his team that paid journalism would not be tolerated. Whether other sections at CCTV-9 were practicing forms of paid journalism was a question I was not able to answer.

Xiaoping [on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth on August 22, 1904], put it in one story, have one spiel about how wonderful Deng Xiaoping is, not five stories saying exactly how wonderful he was, and I just find it incredibly frustrating when you get that, and when you don't get any kind of balance at all in anything, and it's just, it's okay, but when you get it time and time again, and you're having a bad day, it's enough to make you go crazy.

Most of the 'foreign experts', including myself, were either not Chinese speakers or were not fluent enough in Chinese or familiar enough with the mediascape to pick up on most of the gaps in stories and would dutifully repeat the Party and government line, without being aware of what more might have gone into the story. Moreover, technically our task was not to make editorial interventions, a criticism that was leveled at me more than once by directors, zhubians and in one case the Deputy Controller, although ironically we were constantly being asked by these same people how to improve the news.

I and my foreign colleagues, for a range of reasons, believed we were doing the right thing by intervening as much as possible in the news making process. Most of our Chinese colleagues were unaware of our particular frustrations. Those that were seemed sympathetic, but also felt that none of us understood China, and that we really had no right to be changing their work, unless they were involved in or initiated the discussion. In principle these were excellent guidelines. But given the deadline pressure under which the copy editors worked, negotiating copy was not always an option.

Moreover, it was hard to tell people, some of whom knew very little about news, that they were wrong, when copy editors picked up mistakes. Much unnecessary friction existed between the writers, reporters and political editors on the one hand and copy editors on the other because of misunderstandings and a lack of time to work through problems. The inexperience of some copy editors only exacerbated the problems, frustrating the better writers and reporters who could not make their story ideas

understood to their foreign colleagues. When copy editors, writers and reporters could find no agreement on a story, the political editors would be forced to adjudicate.

### ***Role of the political editors***

The role of the political editor was primarily to protect the channel from criticism from the censor (CPD) and regulator (SARFT) for using unauthorized terms such as “Mainland China” which might imply that Taiwan is a separate entity instead of “Chinese mainland,” which suggests there is more than the PRC to China, which from the point of view of the PRC government includes Taiwan. Apart from the grind of reading through every line of copy before it was voiced for air, what was left of their time was taken up with attempting to guide young and inexperienced writers and reporters so that their budding careers would not come to an abrupt halt for breaching editorial guidelines. However, their role also made them de facto censors, which would frustrate writers, reporters and copy editors attempting to push boundaries.

The political editors did not work to a set of written rules. Rather, they brought to their judgments a wealth of experience of having negotiated and survived years if not decades inside the PRC’s media system. They were tasked with a thankless job and were the constant focus of carping from both the Chinese and the copy editors, although both groups would also thank them for picking up and correcting their mistakes.

Although I respected their professionalism, I was ambivalent about their place in the newsroom and believed the channel would be better off without them, as I felt they erred too far on the side of caution. But operating without their insights into the limits on reporting was a risk management was unwilling to take, given the downside potential for putting a serious ‘political mistake’ to air, and the inexperience of many of the younger

staff. Perhaps in part due to the diligence of the political editors, CCTV-9 was not the target of a career-ending criticism from SARFT or the CPD during my time there.

As an example of what can go wrong when editorial oversight is missing, at CCTV-9's sister channel, the global Mandarin language channel CCTV-4, two producers were removed and a duty editor sacked when they ran a crawling news bar at the bottom of the screen on September 6, 2004, after the siege of Beslan, inviting viewers to text in a phone message for a prize, answering the question: "How many people have died so far in the Southern Russia hostage crisis? Is it A: 402, B: 338, C: 322 or D: 302?"<sup>107</sup> A spokesman for the Russian President criticized the competition as the result of "incompetence and ignorance of what happened in Beslan on the part of the programmers... [and] monstrous hard-heartedness of those who composed the questions" (SCMP, 2004a). The Jiangnan Times (Nanjing) reported that the quiz "attracted the serious attention of the heads of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Central Propaganda Department and SARFT."<sup>108</sup> In the wake of the scandal, SARFT issued a regulation banning unauthorized phone quizzes (Cheung, 2004).

The primary role of the political editors was not to prevent this kind of mistake, which was the result of stupidity, but to deal with errors that more often than not resulted from inexperience rather than any attempt to subvert the editorial system. It was a measure of the immaturity of CCTV-9 as a news channel that it required political editors. But the example of CCTV-4 suggests management was wise to employ them. As already noted, despite their de-facto role, the political editors were not censors. That role fell to the Central Publicity Department and SARFT.

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<sup>107</sup> Source: translation by a CCTV-9 copy editor.

<sup>108</sup> Source: translation by a CCTV-9 copy editor.

### ***Role of the CPD, SARFT and directives***

Censorship understood as prior constraint was a ubiquitous feature of CCTV-9 in its function within the ‘wai xuan’ system. Governing the actions of staff were the “four basic principles,” which Deng Xiaoping enunciated in 1979 as fundamental guidelines for CPC members and government organizations. The principles were written into the ‘Preamble’ of the 1982 PRC Constitution and remain in force today (Li, 1995):

1. Uphold the socialist road
2. Uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat (in 1982, changed to “Uphold the people’s democratic dictatorship”)
3. Uphold the leadership of the Communist Party
4. Uphold Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought

Staff at CCTV-9 said principle No.3 was de-facto the number one principle and the only one now taken seriously:

These four principles are the guiding principles for our broadcasters, and have never been changed for decades, and will never be changed for decades ahead. But how to interpret is another story in China today. I think as long as you don’t openly publish articles to try to turn over the power of the CPC, you could be quite safe to say what you want. The margin of the other three principles is larger and larger, sometimes blurred. Few people care about them, and there has been no single definition of those concepts. China is much freer than it was ten years ago. But democracy is a long process and step by step, but the continued progress means people have stronger taste for making their own decisions.

In practice, these principles governed the day-to-day practice of the staff at all levels, regardless of their Party affiliation, since they were working for a state-controlled broadcaster (for a discussion of the Party Principle system, see Zhao, 1998, pp. 19-33). The four principles meant certain stories simply could not be aired, or had to be aired in a particular way. As examples:

- The Dalai Lama was only referred to if the reference was critical.

- Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian could not be called 'President Chen'.
- Taiwan must always be referred to as a province of China. The words 'China' and 'Taiwan' cannot be used in the same sentence.
- No story could be run that indicated or implied an overarching criticism of the CPC or government, although criticism of the performance of particular individuals, institutions or policies was acceptable if *Xinhua* or CCTV-1 was the source (i.e. discussing corruption as a systemic flaw was unacceptable, whereas a story about a particular instance of a corrupt official was acceptable).
- Any story involving governance had to show the Party and/or government in a positive light (the rule of thumb was that the system was working, but individuals and/or institutions within the system failed)
- As a rule of thumb, disaster stories required some mention of governance (for example, mine disaster stories, regardless of the cause of the disaster, emphasized the efforts Party and government officials were making to organize rescue work).
- Video of senior PRC leaders should be sourced from CCTV, and not from Reuters and APTN if at all possible.
- No reporting of family members of senior PRC leaders was allowed, even when they should have been in the news otherwise (When I asked at CCTV-9 why the news that the company, Nucotech, run by President Hu Jintao's son, Hu Haifeng, had won a lucrative contract to supply security scanners at airports nationwide (Reuters, 2006), I was told "I have never heard of that news, I think none of the Chinese media has ever reported such story.")
- Any mention of the Tiananmen incident on June 3-4, 1989 was forbidden.
- Any mention of Falun Gong was only to denounce the cult and its followers.



- The Catholic Pope was ignored (the PRC does not have diplomatic relations with the Vatican), although Pope John Paul II's death produced a series of terse reports, each of them a single paragraph read out by the anchor with no video (Illustration 3).<sup>109</sup>

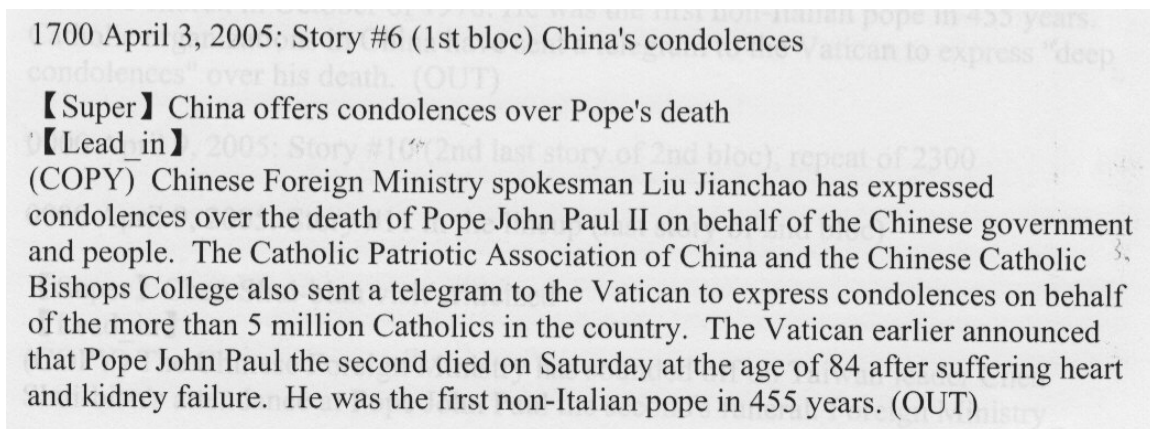


Illustration 3: PRC reacts to death of Pope John Paul II

This list is far from complete, and only includes what I picked up from working in the newsroom and wrote in my diary. Staff said they did not have written lists of banned topics, learning through experience what was and was not possible. Management provided updates on what were euphemistically called ‘editorial guidelines’ at the weekly Tuesday meetings.

Research into banned keywords on the Internet in the PRC gives some idea of the range of impermissible topics in news. Brady (2005b) has summed up this research, noting that in 2004 about 30 percent of banned Internet keywords were sex-related, another 30 percent related to Falun Gong only, with the remaining 40 percent associated

<sup>109</sup> The Vatican's partial recognition of a Beijing-installed Bishop in September 2007 suggests that the Pope may come off the list of the PRC's persona non-grata (Buckley, 2007).

with “the most sensitive topics in PRC politics” (Brady, 2005b). These ranged from “Sino-Russian border” (中俄边界 – zhong’e bianjie), due to accusations that former President and CPC General Secretary Jiang Zemin had ‘sold out’ the PRC in 1999 by signing a pact with Russia’s President Vladimir Putin accepting the existing borders between the two countries, through to the names of retired leaders such as former Premier Zhu Rongji (Brady, 2005b).

Brady’s (2005a; 2005b; 2006) work is indispensable for understanding censorship in the PRC, and the role of the CPD in media control. She points to a vast mechanism of surveillance and control, which she likens to “the church in medieval Europe” (Brady, 2006, p. 59). Like the medieval church, the CPD has absolute authority over media. As an example of its scope and powers of control, another analyst Sun Xupei (2004) points out with reference to the 2003 SARS scandal that it was “inevitable that the Chinese media would fail to report the SARS crisis in the early days of the outbreak” (p. 4), since “without permission from the Party and government, the media cannot report significant events” (p. 4). As Sun (2004) notes:

Nothing in any media-related laws or regulations is designed to protect press freedom. Nor do the media have a right to independently report the outbreak of plagues so as to protect public welfare. And any report on important events or incidents must first be reviewed and approved by Party committees at all levels of the CPC or their propaganda departments; the standard for that review is whether the reporting is beneficial to stability and whether it is beneficial to the Party and the state. (p. 4)

Sun outlines the responsibility system within media control, which puts media under the supervision of the government and Publicity Department at each of the four administrative levels – central, provincial, municipal, and county (prefectural) – and the hazards this poses for reporters and their sources.

Chinese media are all ranked within the political hierarchy, and they never criticize the departments of the Party and government at the same level, not to mention criticizing departments at a higher level. When they publish reports to criticize and inspect the departments of the Party and government at a lower level, Chinese journalists are aware of the need to protect the source of news so as to prevent the source from being threatened or some other revenge taken. But they will surely reveal the source of the news if it is demanded by the departments of the Party and government at the same or higher level. Nor will they conceal the source of news in court. The reason for all these is that Chinese media are all state-owned, and most are owned by the departments of the Party and government. Thus they have no choice but to reveal the source of their news. What's more, the media are not entitled by law or social custom to protect the source of their news (Sun, 2004, p. 11).

Here then is a hierarchy of control, which seemingly puts the power of the CPD and government over media beyond dispute. Directives and instructions from above, i.e. from the CPD, SARFT and CCTV management, were a fact of daily life at CCTV-9. The Chinese staff treated these interventions into their work as an unavoidable nuisance, as an injunction on reporting had the force of an absolute prohibition, until it was lifted, if at all. The Beslan story mentioned above was the subject of a directive that went into force soon after the militants occupied the school. CCTV-9 had reported the story when it broke with a 'copy' story (Illustration 4), a paragraph on a breaking story read by the anchor in the absence of video. CCTV-9 updated this story for the 1900 edition of World Wide Watch. But after that a handwritten directive was faxed to the channel banning further reporting. SARFT issued the directive of which the relevant part read “不要报，不炒” (bu yao bao, bu chao – do not report it, do not stir it up).

Swartz (2006) discusses this kind of order with Chinese reporters, including at CCTV, and was told: “Buyao bao, buyao chao means don't sensationalize it. We should be objective. It doesn't necessarily mean that you shouldn't cover a certain event, but it stresses the importance of objective reporting. You should not focus on the sensational. If

you cover a small thing every day, then it'll become a big issue" (Swartz, 2006, pp. 119-120).

When I asked at CCTV whether objectivity and sensationalism were the issues with such a directive, I was told:

To me it's quite clear, if someone from above said "This matter should follow the principle of 'by yao bao, bu yao chao,'" that's to me quite clear. No program should touch this topic, till this restriction has been lifted, or another similar event happens. The focus of this slogan is 'by yao bao'. And if you 'bao' it, that means you 'chao' it, and you are stepping [over] the red line.

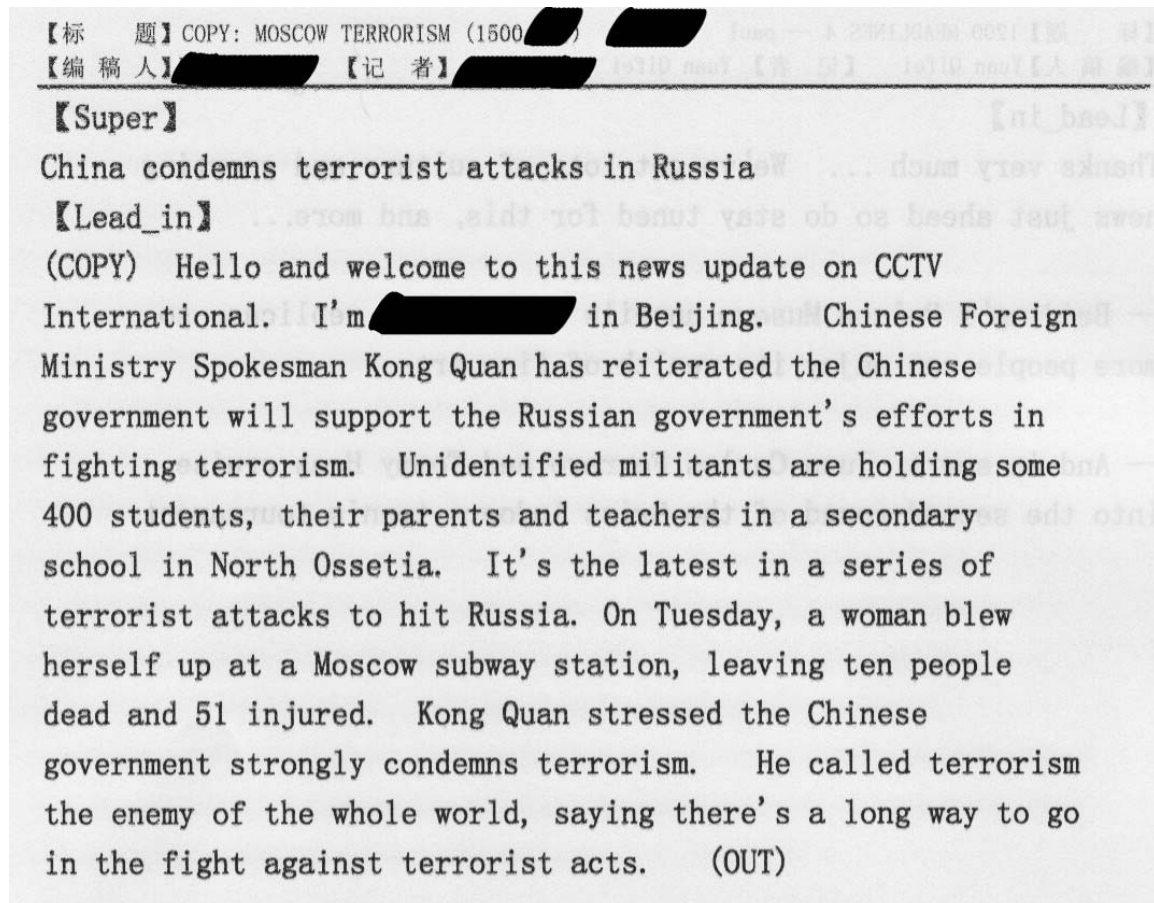


Illustration 4: Copy story CCTV-9, aired 1500 September 1, 2004

In the case of Beslan, according to staff, one concern of the CPD and SARFT were copy cat attacks in the PRC, especially as attacks on school children in the PRC were a hot topic in media and had been the subject of a number of stories in previous months:

Like some of the other examples, like the kindergarten yesterday story, being stabbed by a doorkeeper and causing many children injured one died. Our first reaction, all of the media's first reaction is to go there and cover that. We have all aired, this story has been the top story with pictures, with everything for almost half a day, and then there is a kind of demand, you know, from higher level that say this kind of story is not good. We should not do it. We should only do it when something real new happens, like another child is dying, or something really really important happen, otherwise we will low down the tone. I think their fearing is that they don't want the international society, and wants the people in Beijing, may think that the city is unsafe, unstable, this may interfere, you know, the foreign investment and also raise out other people's maybe their dissatisfaction towards the government. This maybe give them a hint to let more of such kind of things to happen. I think the government's intention is good. But the way in dealing that is not very wise.

Although there was sympathy on the copy cat issue, staff suggested that the CPD wanted to cover up attacks in the PRC, since they reflected badly on governance. Also noteworthy in management's response below is the assumption that a similar editorial system operates in the United States as operates in the PRC:

[Jirik] Okay, but yesterday [Beslan], but how did you feel at not being able to report, did you feel as a journalist that this was a good story.

[management] It's a story, the thing is how we cover it, okay. If we have this editorial policy that we perhaps shouldn't at one moment, we shouldn't put it into our news cast, or to put it as a top story, I can understand, and I think there is some considerations, and I think these considerations are not from, from a propaganda thing, but from a more consideration of the negative impact of this story. For example, if things happens like the kidnapping of school children, if we give extensive coverage, a lot, a lot, a lot, that might give some kind of clue or suggestion to a similar terrorist you know, elsewhere in the world. I think this happens in America also. After the 911, of course it's a big thing, and then we cover it, and all the major networks in the US covered it. But after that I think they have their directives, I don't know from where, but they have their directives

that we should not play the actual image of the bombing time and time again, and try to show this impact, and try to give this impact, try to give this always put this image in the minds of every American, and also in the mind of every terrorist, and then they can, I think, you know some considerations, perhaps are not necessarily inconsistent of the news value, but inconsistent of the overall well being of the whole society. I think that's reasonable. But still, for example, if the images are too powerful, perhaps TV should not play it again and again, or should not carry it at the moment. But you can see it's being carried on other news media, on the internet, but maybe after a while, and then, we are not trying to say that this is not happened. But we have some other ways, like some reactions, things like that.

[anchor] I think the starting point is understandable. And I really agree with that, that if you show too many pictures of violence, you know, of people being beheaded, I mean there are good people, who feel disgusted about that, and there are people who might copy that, might learn from you know from the bad guys and do the same thing. So I agree with not putting too many of these kinds of images on TV. People will copy that, in the end. But, I would report it. But I wouldn't show those graphic pictures. And, after all, news is about what happened. And if something substantial, you know, like twenty students were, you know, hurt, wounded or killed, you got to report that. I don't think it is responsible, if you just say, you know, "Don't say anything about that." Because, this is one reason that people commit crime, they copy. But there are other things that make people commit crime. And those things are, need to be addressed, need to be known too. For instance, there are a lot of problems in the society, and just by not reporting them, does not make it better. So, you got to report the problems, but maybe not in a way, but not the details, no, in a different way.

During my time at CCTV, I collected as many directives and instructions as possible from the computer system, where they were listed. The list is reproduced in Appendix 8, which includes every directive I found in the system between February 2004 and November 2005.<sup>110</sup> I do not know whether this list is complete or representative, given that directives were also issued in face-to-face meetings, by phone and by fax (as the case was with Beslan). The list on the computer was only those directives that were entered into it by different people with access to the system, from zhubians at CCTV-9 through to people within CCTV acting on the authority of the CPD and SARFT. In

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<sup>110</sup> In the period of observation, February 2004 through January 2005, the list had eight directives.

addition, I do not know how the list was managed, so it is possible that directives were deleted.

Most of the directives were ‘notices’ and appear to be internal to CCTV, the normal result of editorial work.<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless the range of topics and prohibitions does give some insight into the editorial limits of news making in the PRC. The prohibition on showing the government in a bad light was obvious in directives banning coverage of a disgraced high-ranking Party member (#12, p. 573), and on collusion between the Chengdu Railway police and pick-pockets (#13, p. 574). Social stability was an evident issue in the prohibition on reporting the effect of rising grain prices on student food (#5, p. 570), and on reporting on the clash between Chinese workers and Russian police (#11, p. 573). Sensitive domestic and foreign policy issues were evident in directives about how to report on Tibetan Buddhism (#17, p. 575), sources for reporting on Hong Kong (#1, p. 569), and orders not to report on a protest at the Japanese embassy in Beijing (#4, p. 570) and rumors that former CPC General Secretary Zhao Ziyang had died (#8, p. 572). An attempt at spin control was evident in a ban on the Foreign Minister’s statement that the PRC has ruled out first use of nuclear weapons (#18, p. 576).

To my mind, the two most interesting directives on the list concerned the reporting of Bird Flu, and evidence of the impact of commercialization on priorities at CCTV. In the case of Bird Flu, a SARFT directive (#22, p. 577) provided straight forward guidance about the need for accurate and socially responsible reporting on Bird Flu. However, within CCTV, the following directive (#19, p. 576) was issued: “关于禽

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<sup>111</sup> It was also unclear to me, which directives were directed at CCTV-9, or whether directives targeted particular news channels. My rationale for believing any directive in the system applied to CCTV-9 regardless of their source or particular target is that CCTV-9 did not have any dispensation from not reporting what any other news channel had been told not to report. So, a directive targeting any news channel would also apply to CCTV-9. However, it is quite possible that directives targeting CCTV-9 did not apply to other news channels at CCTV, since management made clear to staff that as a ‘wai xuan’ channel, CCTV-9 did not have the “media supervision” (watchdog) role that domestic news channels had.

流感的新闻，国外的咱跟着报，国内的少报。” (“Concerning Bird Flu news, if it’s overseas report it straight, if it’s domestic tone it down”). When I asked staff about the latter directive, they expressed shock and said something so irresponsible could not have come from the CPD. Given the furor over the SARS reporting scandal, it would seem the last thing the government needed was obfuscation over the situation with Bird Flu. The motivation for the CCTV directive remained unclear and was superseded by the SARFT directive, which was issued five days after the first directive and had the greater authority, calling for “accurate and appropriate” reporting, attention to expert analysis and concern to avoid social panic.

In contrast to the call for socially responsible broadcasting about Bird Flu, a second directive, also presumably from within CCTV, suggested that commercialization might be undermining social responsibility at CCTV. The directive (#7, p. 571) was short and to the point. It was issued on October 10, 2004 and stated “蒙牛集团负面报道一概不报” (“Absolutely no reporting on the negative report on the Mengniu Dairy Group”). There was speculation at CCTV-9 that the directive referred to a report in *Beijing Ribao* (Beijing Daily) the previous day that the Mengniu Dairy Group had failed a Beijing government spot check for bacteria in its iced popsicle products in the capital (Huang, 2004). In itself the injunction might have been unremarkable. Perhaps it had been one store only. Perhaps the problem was in storage and not in production. In short, a responsible journalist would seek to clarify the source of the excessive bacteria before going public with a story, especially one that potentially involved risk to children.

However, another explanation suggested was the Mengniu Group’s relationship with CCTV. The dairy was the broadcaster’s single biggest advertiser in 2004, buying 310 million yuan (USD 37.6 million) worth of air time at the annual advertising auction in November 2003 (Chou Wiest, 2003). As a report on the toxic popsicles may have had



an adverse effect on CCTV's biggest advertiser and hence its own revenue, channel management might have acted to prevent broadcasting the news.<sup>112</sup> I was unable to ascertain the reason for the injunction. Without evidence of harm, it was a minor domestic story and of no merit for CCTV-9.

Nevertheless, the relationship between CCTV and the Mengniu Group and the fact of the directive begged for further clarification, if only to clear CCTV of the suggestion of corporate malfeasance. Despite cynicism amongst staff about the directive, as far as I know no attempt was made to follow up to find out whether this was a story. This is not to suggest staff were not interested in the story, only that they had been gagged, a situation that irritated and at times angered them.

On November 26, 2004, for example, the CPD faxed a one-line directive stating "Do not report on the incident at the school in Ruzhou, Henan."<sup>113</sup> The directive banned further reporting on what was one of the day's biggest running stories after a man had stabbed to death eight sleeping teenage school boys in their dormitory the previous day. One staff member on duty later recalled their anger at the time: "You feel so frustrated. At that time, you feel like you really hate the government. You feel like you are covering up from the people."

This sense of frustration brings me to the core issue of control at CCTV-9. Rather than external agencies, or higher authorities within the channel exercising control over the broadcast, editorial control was primarily a function of self-control and the internalization of restraint through self-censorship, the result of socialization into the routines of news making, including professionalism understood as obeying management

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<sup>112</sup> I am indebted to a foreign colleague at CCTV-9 for drawing this directive and the background story to my attention.

<sup>113</sup> I saw this fax, but it not included in Appendix 8 because it was not on the computer system.

and ipso facto the censors and regulatory authorities, and concern over pay and conditions.

### *Self-censorship*

Self-censorship was the norm at CCTV-9. Every person I interviewed, from management down to the interns, admitted to self-censorship in one form or another, and most of my respondents said self-censorship was a greater constraint on their work than censorship.

[Jirik] Who censors your work?

[staff] Well you have a self-censorship, because you have rules and principles that have been given to you by the publicity department, China's ideological watchdog.

[staff] For example we receive more, you know, orders from the above levels of administrators of the propaganda machine says this could be doing, and could be not. Their basic idea is to not to put bad images on China, and to say, to help China improve its images, and help China to get more money from the international community, get more support from the outside world. So, they thought that having some negative reports will not be contribution to that. So they will not allow us. The orders are much much more now [following the May 2004 relaunch]... But this also makes a big problem for us, who really handle the news, because when they have more orders, many other people will be doubted what can do and what cannot be done. So the self-censorship must be improved. You know we have the censorship from above, but what is more invisible hand is self-censorship... But who are the censors? Actually the censors are invisible. But it's real, because whenever you really make mistakes, you will be removed from the position.

[staff] I remember during the SARS period. Foreign reporters were criticizing Chinese reporters' responsibilities. They said they kind of very sharp and said reporters don't have the responsibilities to report how serious, and then make it, not supervising the government at least, and make the whole thing worsening. But what we argue is about, how can an individual reporter do anything, because in Western media you have law to protect the interests of reporters. But in China, we don't have. Maybe if we really did something, maybe it could be an end to your career, to what you make a living. I mean you have to have this very practical thinking about that.

[Jirik] Do you practise self-censorship?

[staff] Yes. I think it's kind of a must for people working here... I'm trying to, to make a balance between my own judgment and the news policy in China.

[Jirik] In terms of control, do you see more control exercised through direct censorship, or self-censorship?

[staff] Maybe self censorship more important, yeah, because we know what we been doing, this kind of thing. Yeah, we don't need somebody to tell us not to do this, do that, not to do this kind of thing.

### **Socialization into the routines of news making & pay and conditions**

From the above quotes, clearly self-censorship fed into the routines of news making. Staff were aware that their jobs and livelihood depended on avoiding criticism of their work. Every attempt to push the reporting envelope was weighed beforehand by the possible consequences of breaching an unseen, constantly shifting, yet very real line between the permissible and impermissible.

In deciding just how far to go, writers and reporters were aware that the opportunities for media work rarely got any better than CCTV in the PRC for Chinese nationals who wanted to work for local as opposed to foreign media, as one reporter, who had been courted by foreign media, explained to me in turning down an offer. He wanted to make a difference and he could only do that working for domestic as opposed to foreign media.

As a national level medium, CCTV had the authority to report nationwide and with relative impunity on events affecting all levels of the Party and government, except the central levels of the CPC and government. Should a journalist choose to leave CCTV, he or she had the opportunity to work for foreign media, or for lower-tier media, for example at the provincial or municipal level. Few chose to. The added money at foreign media was attractive to some. But for others commitment to the PRC's media

development came first. Although Shanghai TV was seen as a possible alternative to CCTV-9, at the time it did not have an English-language channel. Other broadcasters simply could not compete with CCTV, and CCTV-9 attracted away from provincial and municipal broadcasters their best English-language talent.

Even when CCTV and CCTV-9 were hit by a budget crisis in late 2004, few staff took the opportunity to leave. Beginning in October 2004, the government began an audit of CCTV. The audit scuttled the practice of salaries being topped up through what amounted to an expense reimbursement system that was used to double and in cases triple salaries. Before the audit, total salaries (including reimbursement) at CCTV-9 ranged from unpaid internships through to about 20,000 yuan (USD 2,400)<sup>114</sup> a month for a senior zhubian. Most non-management salaries for established Chinese staffers fell in the 6,000 to 10,000 yuan (USD 700 to USD 830) range per month. Foreign experts were paid 8,990 (USD 1080) per month if they chose to live in a furnished apartment at a foreign experts' compound at the Friendship Hotel paid for by CCTV, or 14,990 yuan (USD 1800) per month if they chose to find their own accommodation.<sup>115</sup>

The audit only affected Chinese salaries and cut them by as much as two-thirds. Staff were extremely bitter about the pay cuts, which brought their salaries more into line with the Beijing average, which in 2004 was 3,000 yuan per month in the state-owned media sector.<sup>116</sup>

Despite sporadic attempts by management in the months following the audit to increase salaries, the situation had not improved by late 2005. Nevertheless, few staff chose to leave. Of those I spoke to who did, all said they were leaving as much for the

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<sup>114</sup> Exchange rate on the day of the interview. Figures in USD are all rounded to the nearest 10 dollars.

<sup>115</sup> Foreigners not employed as foreign experts were paid per show. The highest paid of the foreigners was a presenter, whose contract paid them 600 yuan per 40 minute taping session, about USD 110 per hour.

<sup>116</sup> Source: <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2005/indexeh.htm>

chance to pursue other interests as for the money, having decided CCTV was not the right place for them to work. In no case did bitterness over the loss of salary segue into active sabotage of the workplace, although from writers up, respondents told me they were less inclined to do more than the minimum required to get the bulletins to air, that they felt cheated and that they had lost their enthusiasm for the work. On balance though, most staff who wanted to remain in journalism had nowhere else to go.

#### **EDITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RESISTANCE**

From the above picture, the question of editorial responsibility, let alone resistance seems almost like a non-question. Given the scale of the external apparatus of surveillance and control arrayed against CCTV as an institution and the deep imbrication of CCTV-9 in the Party/State's 'wai xuan' system, how much editorial responsibility personnel had is open to question. And in this context, is the possibility of resistance even thinkable?

Given the historical dual role of media makers as servants and critics of the power structure, staff at CCTV-9 had little incentive for the most part to report against the grain of the editorial agendas being set by CCTV-1 and the international news agencies. For the most part these agendas matched their own, to report in an accurate and timely fashion about domestic and international issues. However, the 'wai xuan' function of CCTV-9 meant that particular attention had to be paid in reporting the domestic and foreign policy story in a manner conducive to promoting the PRC's image abroad. When that demand conflicted with the editorial priorities at CCTV-9, space opened up for resistance. The challenge was greatest for reporters (see Chapter 10: Reporters). However, even in the general news group resistance was possible. But it was an invisible form of resistance, which is best understood as a refusal. And it was all the more

powerful for being invisible, since it was also invisible to the censorial and regulatory authorities.

Bentham's panopticon is an appropriate metaphor for the context in which the editorial system at CCTV-9 operated. The Central Publicity Department was the invisible seat of surveillance which operated as an unseen but ever present psychological force instilling discipline in media makers. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) discusses the training of bodies associated with the discipline of the army that was introduced into an array of institutions – the school, the hospital, the prison – as a means of producing docile bodies that would govern themselves under the threat of perpetual surveillance exercised by the panopticon. The editorial system at CCTV-9 worked like an orrery (and we should not forget that Louis Althusser was Foucault's teacher), producing docile media makers who could be relied on to make politically correct news, all by themselves, with a minimum of actual intervention. Except of course, as Foucault (1983) pointed out (and E. P. Thompson (1979) noted with respect to Althusser's orrery) the efficiencies sought in the disciplines of the panopticon were not guaranteed. The system simply did not work in the way it was designed:

After a while, after more than one century trying this disciplinary system, people noticed that it was not at all the most economical means, but a rather costly, and that there are much more efficient and discreet and implicit ways of forming and leading peoples than these disciplinary techniques. (Foucault, 1983)

The disciplinary techniques failed because the bodies refused to be made docile. Foucault (Rabinow, 1984) discusses the failure of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century "police" state in France:

It seems to me that at the very moment it becomes apparent that if one governed too much, one did not govern at all that one provoked results contrary to what one desired... that aside from torture and execution, which preclude any resistance, no matter how terrifying a given system may be, there always remains the possibility

of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional groupings. (Rabinow, 1984, pp. 241-242)

Applied to the PRC, one begins to see how the power of the CPD functions and why it may be rather more limited than it might appear to be. Brady (2005b; 2006), for example, outlines an impressive apparatus of surveillance and control, including of the internet. But as a study conducted out of UC Davis suggests, censorship of the internet is more “erratic” than generally considered and that the PRC’s firewall that “tries to sanitize web browsing is much more porous than previously thought” (BBC, 2007). Importantly though, “[d]espite the failures of the blocking system, the researchers said the idea that web browsing was being overseen often acted as a spur to self-censorship” (BBC, 2007).

Similarly at CCTV-9, censorship was far more erratic than might be expected from a body so powerful as the CPD, except when one considers how much media the department has to police, how thinly spread are its forces, and as a result, how much media is likely to go to air unobserved.

Media makers at CCTV-9 were well aware that the likelihood of being observed was minimal, but the risks of putting to air something that could incur the wrath of the censor mitigated against it happening, should it be seen. This is the classic sense in which the panopticon is supposed to function. However, as Foucault (cited in Rabinow, 1984) himself noted, and Certeau (1984) would later make central to his criticism of the system, the panopticon was partial and inefficient. Too much could go unobserved. For the most part, the CPD has no way of knowing what is actually happening inside media in the PRC. It operates through observing content. What it cannot see is what does not go into content. And this is what I call ‘refusal,’ and at CCTV-9 it was a powerful form of resistance to oversight.

In my time at CCTV, the single best example of refusal was CCTV-9's treatment of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Deng Xiaoping on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1904. As the leading architect of the post-Mao PRC, Deng is a revered figure, and in a state-controlled media system, lavish coverage was to be expected in late August 2004. Like other media (see below, Illustration 5 & Illustration 6), CCTV was told to feature the anniversary. But at CCTV-9, although tributes were paid to Deng, the general news department refused to embrace the obeisance, delegating the honor of coverage of the anniversary to the entertainment news program, Culture Express (see p. 272). The decision to downplay the anniversary was taken by the Editorial Board:

[I]t's better to do nothing, than do something... I can imagine that only a year, two year ago, if the anniversary of Deng Xiaoping, and we have orders to elaborate this date, to tell the world how much achievements Deng Xiaoping has helped China achieve, that we will do a series, many many angles, economic benefits, students out of school, but go back to school, and Deng Xiaoping's you know theory. But this year ... what we did is only a documentary. But for the news we didn't do anything almost, because everyone knows to make an objective report, if we have conclusion of Deng Xiaoping, we must mention the Tiananmen Square incident... And we argued over what should we do if should cover. What does this specific date mean to an audience to a target audience of the western countries, what would be their reactions to say too much good words to Deng Xiaoping. But we just do some you know factual, and one or two must done self-produced stories, and only have the documentary 'Who is Deng Xiaoping,' blah, blah, blah... We are doing this. But we are not doing something as what maybe some of the officials expected to do.





Illustration 5: CRI (online) Tribute to Deng

What does not exist cannot be measured, so I cannot make a case for how much resistance staff at CCTV-9 offered in the form of refusal. But the case of downplaying Deng's anniversary was an excellent example of Certeau's weapons of the weak, a tactic by which the strategies of political authority were evaded.

In their discussion of Certeau, Pan & Lu (2003) note that professionalism is one of the tactics that PRC journalists use against the Party and government. As one staff member noted about the more egregious demands made by the external authorities, "They let [want] you to lie but because of China's media improvement no media journalists wants to be a liar, neither *Xinhua*, *China Radio International*, or our TV station." From my observation at CCTV-9, this kind of professionalism was becoming the norm. For all its powers of surveillance and control, the CPD was more limited than is

generally understood in its ability to act, especially against refusal, since inaction amounted to invisibility and as such evaded the all-seeing gaze of the panopticon.

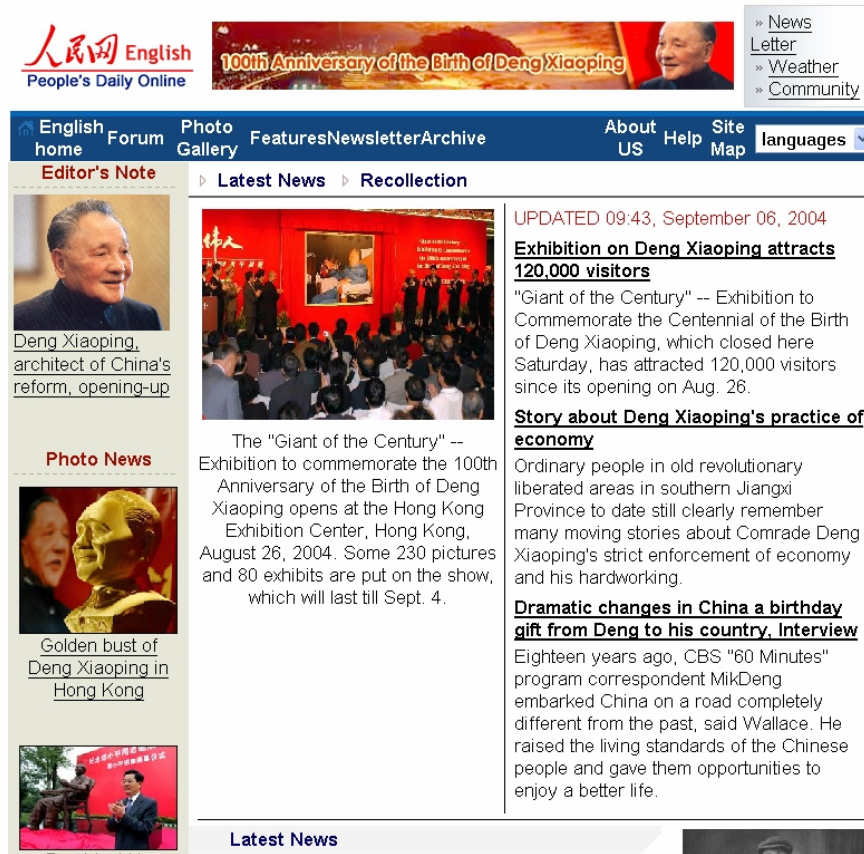


Illustration 6: *People's Daily* (online) Tribute to Deng

## DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have outlined the editorial system at CCTV-9. As part of the Party/State's 'wai xuan' system, CCTV-9 is imbricated into the hierarchy of governance within the PRC and plays a key role as an international mouthpiece for the Party/State. In keeping with the principle of democratic centralism a line can be drawn directly from a writer at CCTV-9 directly to the Politburo through twelve degrees of separation. The pressure not to make mistakes within this system is diffused through a series of editorial

checks and balances that ensure political mistakes do not enter the broadcast at any point of the production system.

The bulk of the responsibility for getting the news to air falls on the directors and zhubians, although ultimate responsibility for any errors that do occur resides with the controller. Socialization into the routines of news production is functional to the normalization of self-censorship, which is further reinforced by concern over pay and conditions. Despite ubiquitous censorship from external agencies, self-censorship is the primary means on ensuring editorial guidelines are not breached by writers and reporters. Copy editors and political editors further refine the product although the former play a somewhat antagonistic role within the news productions system, even as they massage the final product into a shape appropriate for air. Although the conventions of television news have evolved in a manner that privileges the performance of anchors, they are almost irrelevant to the news production system, functioning primarily as ‘talking heads,’ who brand the channel for the public. In sum, CCTV-9 works on a loosely held leash, rarely straying beyond the permissible limits of reporting laid down by the CPD and SARFT, re-emphasized at weekly editorial meetings and internalized as the norms of daily working life.

However, the normalization of self-censorship through the routinization of news production largely evacuates any immediate sense of the role of the censorial and regulatory authorities in day-to-day news making. Although staff understand and are aware of the control that external authorities have over their work, in their day-to-day jobs they do not experience this control as coercive because they are aware of its limits. The institutional forces shaping the story and the habitus of journalistic agency create a field in which hegemony rather than coercion better explains news production. Consent to domination is the unwritten contract that binds the workers of CCTV to their jobs.

But this contract is also a license that empowers journalists to push against those limits. As a result, the news making process remains fraught with tension as competing forces within the journalistic field work to shape its limits. Although the members of the reporting group at CCTV-9 were the most obvious agents in this constant struggle for control of the story (see Chapter 10), the bulk of the news was created by writers from third party sources. Their work was institutionalized in the monotony of 24-hour news production. On the surface, their contribution was unremarkable. But in the context of the goals the CPD has set for CCTV-9, even unremarkable work can have unintentionally subversive potential. Downplaying Deng's birth anniversary was an example of refusal as a tactic of resistance that was exercised even within the general news group.

## **Chapter 9: Production**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, I outlined the news editorial system within which CCTV-9 was imbricated and the system as it functioned within the channel. In this chapter, I want to move away from self-censorship, censorship and the pressure put on media by external agencies such as the CPD and SARFT to analyze everyday news production.

The process of production was one of constantly and rhythmically moving stories through the different stages of news making to ensure a regular supply for each bulletin. The primary tasks of production were to make news and simultaneously reduce to a minimum the possibility of errors in the story making process, whether errors of content, narrative or production. As a result an extremely regimented news production system was in operation at CCTV-9, similar to the systems that operate at broadcasters like CNN-I and the BBC-WS. The less disruption there was to the news making system, the more efficiently it ran.

In Chapter 7, I focused on the resistance to change that characterized the May 2004, relaunch. In Chapter 8, I looked at editorial control and its negotiation. In this chapter, I focus on the continuity of the news production system before and after the May 2004 relaunch, despite the shift to rolling news, a change that management achieved by putting news or news-related shows at the top of every hour.

Despite the sense, evident from the previous chapter, that directors and zhubians in particular felt that they were working much harder, Figure 2 (p. 208) shows that the output of the general news team (Asian News (pre-relaunch), CCTV News, News Updates (post-relaunch), World Wide Watch) was almost the same pre- and post-

relaunch. Again this suggests that despite the relaunch, continuity prevailed over change in the news production system.

In this chapter, I begin with a brief summary of the role of continuity in news production in general. I then focus on production with an introduction that contextualizes production in terms of the audience and the impact conceptualization of the audience has on production. Following this, I address the issues of time and space in organizing production and the routinization of the production process at CCTV-9 through the use of repeat stories and limitations on source material. In the second half of the chapter, I look at the process of production of stories as they made their way through the production system, I outline flaws in the system, in particular its inability to deal with breaking news. Finally, I look at my own attempt to influence production at CCTV-9. The aim of this chapter is to provide an accurate as possible a picture of the general news production process.

This chapter is the second of three that deal with elements of the research question:

- How did news makers at CCTV-9 negotiate control over news making in their day to day work?

The intermediate question and subordinate questions this chapter addressed were as follows:

- How did the production system at CCTV-9 work?
  - What was the role of continuity in news production?
  - What was the production system at CCTV-9?
  - How did news makers maximize efficiency in news production?
  - What were the key problems in the CCTV-9 news production system?

- What was my role at CCTV-9?

## **THE ROLE OF CONTINUITY IN NEWS PRODUCTION**

Continuity is a staple of any successful news operation. A wealth of insights (Altheide, 1974; Benson & Neveu, 2005; Clausen, 2003; Epstein, 1973; Ericson, Baranek, & Chan, 1989; Fishman, 1980; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Golding & Elliott, 1979; Küng-Shankleman, 2000; Schlesinger, 1987; Soloski, 1989; Swartz, 2006; Tuchman, 1978 et al.) exists into news making in both commercialized and public service settings, many of which point to the role of continuity in institutional settings and the organization of news production as the *sine qua non* of an efficient newsroom. As Galtung & Ruge (1965) noted over four decades ago, news for the most part is not new, but olds (existing stories, repetition of themes, focus on the same narrow set of topics, repeated use of the same sources, etc.). Although a cultural understanding of news, such as that proposed by Carey (1989) and defended by Schudson (2005) in which news is a form of stabilizing and organizing reality and our place in it goes some way to explaining the thesis put forward by Galtung & Ruge, as an institution news is still defined by its ability to constantly appear fresh. Therefore, the paramount task facing any news organization is to ensure the stable and orderly processing of olds in a manner that constantly elides time so that the present moment is the only one that matters, and to stabilize, process and allocate efficiently an appropriate place in the construction of reality for any story, which, atypically, is new.

Efficiency is achieved through the organization of news making, and organizational issues of news production cross borders. The characteristic features of output are common to all news programs: an anchor or anchors,<sup>117</sup> a backdrop, a limited

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<sup>117</sup> Some news shows, including at CCTV-9, have introduced dual anchors in a bid to generate on air ‘chemistry,’ which is how one consultant described a recommendation, subsequently taken up by

set of forms of stories from live shots to telephone interviews, studio guests, graphics, often animated nowadays. The same technologies built by an extremely small group of companies – Sony, Matsushita (Panasonic), Avid, etc. – put to the same ends are deployed in every news organization worldwide. Variations on the same set of shots frame every bulletin – wide opening, close-up on the anchor, cut to opening story, etc. Politics, business, society (usually in the form of stars, including many ordinary people having fifteen minutes of Warholian fame, regardless of whether they want it), science and technology, sports and weather make up the rundown (or lineup, the running order of stories on a news show).

Almost nothing out of the ordinary ever happens on the news, especially as news increasingly normalizes every form of extra-ordinary behavior or happening. After initial “shock and awe”, the horror of children being blown to bits in Iraq and hostages having their heads cut off seemed passé. After the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004 laid waste to the region, misery became *mise-en-scene* as the focus of the story shifted from the victims to the reporters themselves. In the context-less flow of images that is television news, time stops, context is elided and history disappears. What the viewer sees is not some irruption into the banality of everyday life, but the extraordinary color and range of everyday life reduced to the banality of editorial norms and the production process. And for that process to work, above all it needs to be organized efficiently.

Efficient organization is achieved through continuity: continuity of story choice and presentation, sources, and processing. Accordingly, one should expect to find similar news gathering and news making procedures at any news making site, regardless of whatever claims they make to editorial differences. From my previous work at CCTV,

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management in 2004 to use dual anchors on Biz China. However, the ‘chemistry’ failed to materialize and Biz China would later revert to a single anchor format.



and its comparison with work at NBC and Reuters (see, Jirik, 2004) clearly this was the case at CCTV-9. Therefore, one has much to learn about the organization of CCTV-9 and the role of continuity within it from studying the extant literature on news systems, which are usually considered to be ideologically incommensurable with the PRC news system. Regardless of the formal relationship between media and the power structure, at the level of production, mainstream news systems worldwide display the same characteristics of serving power – attention to official sources and perceived ‘authorities,’ exclusion of dissident and dissenting voices, a narrow range of topics that rarely tracks away from a norm defined as the middle ground between the limits of what is considered political, economically and socially safe to broadcast.

The employment and corporate issues, socialization into the norms of the workplace, and routinization of news production that enable and constrain continuity in the public service and commercial broadcast systems are well known (Fishman, 1980; Golding & Elliott, 1979; Schlesinger, 1987; Schudson, 1991 et al.). As I have noted elsewhere, the literature (He, 2000b; Pan, 2000) suggests similar enabling and constraining processes operate in China (Jirik, 2000). Television journalists from anywhere would have been familiar with key elements of CCTV-9’s newsroom, where constant deadline pressure drove round-the-clock conveyor-belt assembly of news (Jirik, 2000). As I have stated elsewhere, my experience as an assistant desk editor at NBC (based in Moscow) and as a news producer at Reuters led me to the conclusion during my time at CCTV that, in terms of the organizational parameters of news making, the CCTV-9 newsroom differed little from newsrooms with which I was more familiar (Jirik, 2004).

## **CONTINUITY IN PRC NEWS PRODUCTION**

The continuities associated with CCTV-9 are evident from a comparison of lineups from four different phases in the evolution of the channel. Table 12 (below) shows a comparison of programming from 2001, one year after the launch of CCTV-9, September 2002, May 2003 and May 2004, post-relaunch. Of the twenty-two programs broadcast in 2001, sixteen were on air in September 2002, seventeen in May 2003 and eleven in May 2004. Between 2001 and May 2004, six new shows – Nature & Science, Rediscovering China, Travelogue, World Insight, Up Close and Weather – had been introduced. Of these six, all but Up Close and Weather were on air by September 2002. As Chapter 7 emphasized, the May 2004 relaunch was intended to make a radical break with the existing structure and function of the channel. However, from the discussion to date and from Table 12, continuity has clearly been a key feature of the development of CCTV-9.

Table 12: Comparison of programming (source: CCTV-9)

2001	September 2002	May 2003	May 2004
Around China	Around China	Around China	Around China
			Asia Today
			Biz China
Business Guide	Business Guide	Business Guide	
CCTV News	CCTV News	CCTV News	CCTV News
Centre Stage	Centre Stage	Centre Stage	Centre Stage
	China in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century		
China Re-Discovery			
China This Week	China This Week	China This Week	China This Week
China Today	China Today	China Today	
Chinese Civilization		Chinese Civilization	Chinese Civilization
Chinese Cooking			
Culture Express	Culture Express	Culture Express	Culture Express
Dialogue	Dialogue	Dialogue	Dialogue
Documentary	Documentary	Documentary	Documentary
Financial Report	Financial Report	Financial Report	
Financial Review	Financial Review	Financial Review	
Kung Fu			
Learning Chinese	Learning Chinese	Learning Chinese	Learning Chinese
Music Box	Music Box		
	Nature & Science	Nature & Science	Nature & Science
News Asia		News Asia	
	News Updates		News Updates
	Rediscovering China	Rediscovering China	Rediscovering China
Shanghai Today	Shanghai Today	Shanghai Today	
Sports Scene	Sports Scene	Sports Scene	Sports Scene
			Sports Weekend
	Travelogue	Travelogue	Travelogue
TV Guide			
			Up Close
			Weather
	World Insight	World Insight	World Insight
World Wide Watch	World Wide Watch	World Wide Watch	World Wide Watch

Apart from the discussion in Chapter 7, another key reason for continuity was the longevity of senior personnel at the channel, who considered even the Controller, who was appointed head of the English News department in 1998, an outsider. But perhaps the key cause of continuity at CCTV-9 was the organizational imperatives of a 24-hour

channel. Once the editorial and production systems were put in place with the launch of CCTV-9 in September 2000, any attempt to change them would have disrupted the existing news making processes. The zhubians and directors who were managing the day-to-day activities of the newsroom were effectively servicing a news making machine that was running under its own momentum, only making minor adjustments to the lineup as each new bulletin approached. Given its mass and velocity, any attempt to change the speed and direction of this machine would require a colossal expenditure of energy. Allowing it to continue to run on its existing course was both safer and required far less effort. It was safer, because it was the system they knew. And it required far less effort to continue working in a manner with which they were familiar than risk learning a different way of doing the news, especially when few of them had any experience of rolling news operations.

#### **THE PRODUCTION SYSTEM AT CCTV-9**

The CCTV-9 news production system was highly regimented. On average every day writers, directors, producers, copy editors, political editors, anchors and a small team of reporters were responsible for filling 11.6 hours of news-related output pre-relaunch and 13.4 hours post-relaunch (see Figure 2, p. 208).<sup>118</sup> Post-relaunch, general news programming (CCTV News, News Updates, World Wide Watch) was broadcast live except for the 1300 CCTV News, which was a repeat of the 1200 bulletin. However, the 1300 CCTV News could go live as needed. The general news teams were responsible for almost exactly the same amount of news each day pre- and post-relaunch, 5.5 hours and 5.6 hours respectively (see Figure 2, p. 208).

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<sup>118</sup> From Figure 2, but discounting Dialogue and World Insight, which were Current Affairs.

The regimentation of the news production system was achieved through organization and routinization of work in the news room. Each day was divided into four six-hour blocks of programming (see Table 7, p. 204 & Table 8, p. 205). Each block was composed of almost the same elements, allowing for Features to cycle each program four times during the day. The specialist news programs and Current Affairs were a mix of some live programming during the day and repeat bulletins after midnight (Beijing Time) until the following morning. The regimentation of the news production system was maintained through a number of mechanisms: in particular, tight editorial oversight of the production teams, and routinization of newsroom practice.

### **The shift structure, production teams & the issue of the audience**

The shift structure and make up of the production teams before and after the May 2004 relaunch varied as management attempted to develop a system that would service the envisaged rolling service post-relaunch. Management experimented with two different structures of the production team. One was time based, the other was function based.

The time-based system was the original. A production team was headed by a zhubian, who was responsible for a production team consisting of the zhubian, writers and director for fixed shows. That team would work the same shifts and take responsibility for the same shows throughout the week. With the advent of the rolling news service, management experimented with function-based teams, splitting off zhubians, directors and writers into different groups. Moreover, the rotation of staff was not synchronized, so the same zhubians, directors and writers could not be counted on to work together.

The attempt to shift to function-based production caused considerable confusion. The sense of team spirit that had developed under the old system was missed by staff at all levels, as they lost the sense of camaraderie that had been part of their experience of the work place. They felt they were simply coming to work and servicing the news, without taking any responsibility for their work. Moreover, the zhubians themselves were split over which system was more efficient. Some wanted a return to the team-based system. Others wanted to stick with the time-based system:

[zhubian] I think [the Controller] has finally understood it is wrong to break the old teams into new teams, and he thinks, now he thinks it is correct to have, to give people a sense of responsibility, like you own the show, you're not here as a part timer, to come in and write, and do the writing and do the scrolling of the news. I think he finally has some sense of giving people a sense of owning the show... [The] system now is that the daobo [director] is the daobo, and the writer is the writer, and I am writing for the day, and I'm off for the other days, and I don't give a damn to the whole news, and everything, it's out of my mind.

[Jirik] But the idea was not accepted, basically because the producers rejected the idea?

[zhubian] Yeah, I think you can say that, because we all think it's not realistic, you cannot divide people like [the Controller] wants because there's too small group, if you just divided those people, you cannot, we cannot make the news revolving like at present.

However, in late 2004, due to general dissatisfaction among the news makers the function-based system was abandoned and production returned to the team-based system. Under both systems, the actual number of people required to make news did not change. The day was broken down into three shifts: early morning, daytime and evening with midnight to early morning operating on a skeleton shift. Depending on the shift, making the news would be a zhubian, a director, two to five writers depending on the time of day, one to three copy editors depending on the time of day, one to two political editors depending on the time of day and an anchor.

More staff were needed in the afternoon and evening to produce prime time programming, which was the bloc that ran from 1900 to 2230 Beijing time and included the day's key editions of Asia Today (post-relaunch), Biz China, CCTV News, and World Wide Watch. These editions were key because they included the day's top PRC news, foreign policy news, and news from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao that served the Party/State's interests in line with the channel's remit to be a 'window on China.' This bloc also included the start of the cycle of soft news (Culture Express, Sports Scene), Current Affairs and Feature programming, which was then repeated throughout the following 24-hours.

The concept of prime time would normally be redundant in a rolling 24-hour news service. But CCTV-9's dual status as a window on China and the world justified it. However, one of the unintended consequences of the dual function of CCTV-9 as a window on China and the world played into a parochialism that mitigated against staff developing a sense of servicing a global channel. Moreover, the dual window created a bifurcated audience. Attention to prime time meant news makers were focused on the audience in the PRC (primary Beijing from responses in interviews) and not abroad, although management would stress that the intended audience was primarily overseas.

My interlocutors either contradicted one another or were frustrated at themselves and/or management for failing to clarify the issue of the audience:

[executive producer] I would like to start a big discussion and debate on two very key questions. One is who is our real target audience. How can we compete with CNN, BBC, from what perspective, from what advantage, we can compete with CNN, BBC...

[Jirik] In your opinion, who should be the real target audience?

[executive producer] I think two sides. One is foreigners in China... The second is what I really want to know is how much attractive and how much coverage, how much ratings are our audience outside China.

[zhubian] That's the problem..., because still I don't know what's the main audience of our channel, either the people in Beijing, the foreigners in Beijing, or the people abroad. So I don't know in which way we can please them... I don't think we have a clear idea, what, who are watching CCTV-9. I think that's the biggest problem.

[writer] [W]e, every day ask the question, what is my, what is the target audience is, because every time you write a story, you got to think to yourself what am I writing to, right? But for CCTV, never, none of this is so clear in our mind, who are the target audience...

[Jirik] So you're saying management has not told you who the audience is?

[writer] I don't think we are clear about that. Even the writers, or field reporters. Are we clear? ... I cannot tell from the people working around me, or they say nothing, I don't know, I think they should say our target should be, should be, but this is carried out vaguely...

[Jirik] When you develop a story, do you have a target audience in mind?

[reporter] Well, I think that answer relates to the general philosophy of CCTV-9. CCTV-9's audience is targeted at people who, who speak English inside China, and those people, who, foreign people living in other parts of the world. But, I don't see there is a market analysis of the target audience, so I don't have a clear picture of where these people are. But just an idea that they are in North America, in Europe and in Singapore and some other parts of Asia. And most probably, the majority of those are still in mainland China.

[zhubian] We used to target American audience, the intellectuals. But it seems from the results, from the feedback, emails, phone calls, it seems that domestic foreigners in China is an un-neglectable audience of CCTV-9. And I think where the market lies is this audience. Domestic foreigners.

Not surprisingly, given the level of confusion over the imagined audience the news makers were attempting to address, in a manner similar to the phenomenon Schlesinger (1987) observed at the BBC where colleagues and management proved to be the primary target audience of news makers, the really relevant audience and the one



most immediately evident and accessible to staff at CCTV-9 was one's colleagues and superiors.

A zhubian brought this home to me when CCTV-9 reported on Jiang Zemin's retirement from his last official post of power, that of Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) on September 1, 2004 (BBC, 2004). The resignation was officially made public on September 19, 2004 (BBC, 2004).<sup>119</sup> However, when CCTV-9 reported on Jiang's resignation, to my mind 'the lead' (the Jiang element) was buried at the bottom of an otherwise tedious report lacking any substance about the activities of the "fourth plenary session of the 16<sup>th</sup> CPC Central Committee," which had accepted his resignation. So, I rewrote the story completely, moving Jiang's resignation to the top of the story. Clearly frustrated with my action, the zhubian on duty refused to accept the changes, insisting on the original. I protested: "Look, the foreign audience..." And was cut off: "John, the audience for this story is [the Controller]."

Interviews corroborated that writers and reporters were concerned to keep channel management satisfied, especially as the intended foreign audiences seemed so remote:

[writer] Why we have a CCTV-9? ... You know sometimes you know maybe they just want CCTV-9, we have a CCTV-9 because the top leaders want to have a CCTV-9. This kind of thing... So it really up to the people in the top ... and for most of the time, I just feel is the only audience is the [Politburo member] Li Changchun or whatever, the government. It's not just, like the really foreigners, or overseas, if we decide to launch, you know our program in say the [United] States, or whatever, they do not feel to consider the real audiences, it's much more like a political goal, or political need to satisfy the central government.

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<sup>119</sup> *The New York Times* had published the information on September 7, which resulted in the arrest and imprisonment of *NYT* researcher, Zhao Yan, on charges of leaking state secrets. The charge was eventually dropped, but Zhao still served three years on conviction for a lesser, unrelated and likely trumped up charge of fraud (Kahn, 2004; Yardley & Kahn, 2006). He was released on September 15, 2007 (Yardley, 2007). That Zhao was so appallingly treated for an information leak within the Party/State system indicated in retrospect the sensitivity of the story at the time, as Jiang's resignation was part of the power struggle between the former CPC General Secretary and PRC President, and Hu Jintao, who held both those posts at the time, and would subsequently assume the position of CMC Chairman as well.

Sometimes you do feel like that. I cannot say one hundred percent it is, but, culture here is people, they just say, have we satisfied [the Controller]. No. If [the Controller] says this, no, this is not correct, and this is correct, this is not correct. If [the Controller] make a call, everybody will be frightened, oh, the boss made a call to tell us to do this and do that. I think everybody is working for him.

However, more seasoned personnel were concerned to balance attention to management with concern for the intended audience of foreigners, noting their pride as journalists was at stake:

[anchor] Yeah, you have to impress those audience [foreigners]. But you have to always keep in mind that [the Controller] and [the Controller's supervisor] they're happy with it too. So this is difficult sometimes. But there is always a compromise where you can at least, you know, please both sides, without upsetting your own judgment. And I think that is not an impossible task. Otherwise it's you know, I should not be working here.

In other words, CCTV-9 was serving three audiences, not two. And of these audiences, the most important was not foreigners inside the PRC or abroad, but management. Whether the world was watching was less important than who was watching on any given evening in Beijing. Neither the internal dynamics of the channel nor its programming were conducive to developing a sense that CCTV-9 was reporting on the world, which is assumed to be the role of broadcasters like CNN-I and the BBC-WS (although I suspect that a critical cultural investigation of their output would find them as Western-centric as CCTV-9 is PRC-centric).<sup>120</sup>

### **Routinization of news production**

Bracketing the issue of the audience, which functioned either to confuse or existed as an afterthought after attention was paid to the concerns of management, the

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<sup>120</sup> If one takes seriously (and I do) the thesis of Edward Said (1995) that *Orientalism* is a discursive frame that shapes what historical writing can say about the Levant, and one applies his thesis to journalism, understood as the first draft of history, as I do, then one is left with the almost impossible task of trying to empirically defend the assertion I have made here. I would have liked to have backed this assertion with comparative literature, but I cannot. The empirical work has not been done, even though critical cultural scholars such as Curran (2000b) and Downing (1996) have laid the ground work.

regimentation of the production teams was assured through management oversight, but institutionalized through internalization of the rhythms of production. These were reflected in the spatial and temporal organization of the news making process and the role of sources and their maximum utilization. In this section, I first look at the routinization of news production through the organization of time and space. I then discuss the role of sources and maximization of resources in news making and their relationship to the institutionalization of editorial oversight.

### ***Time and space in the routinization of news production***

The impact of time and space on news production and the operationalization of editorial control cannot be over-emphasized. I noted above (see p. 300) the early news ethnographies that pointed to the role of organization in news making in constructing a particular reality. Illustration 7 (below) from Schlesinger's (1987) *Putting Reality Together* shows the BBC newsroom in the early 1970s and layout of the news desk (hereafter desk). Despite the passage of time, the BBC model is typical of newsroom layouts, which are dictated by the functions they perform. Those functions are a) the monitoring of potential news, b) the recognition of news (editing) b) the organization of the news gathering process (shooting, reporting, recording incoming transmission signals, etc.), c) liaison with news producers and program directors on appropriate content for news shows d) news production e) play-out.

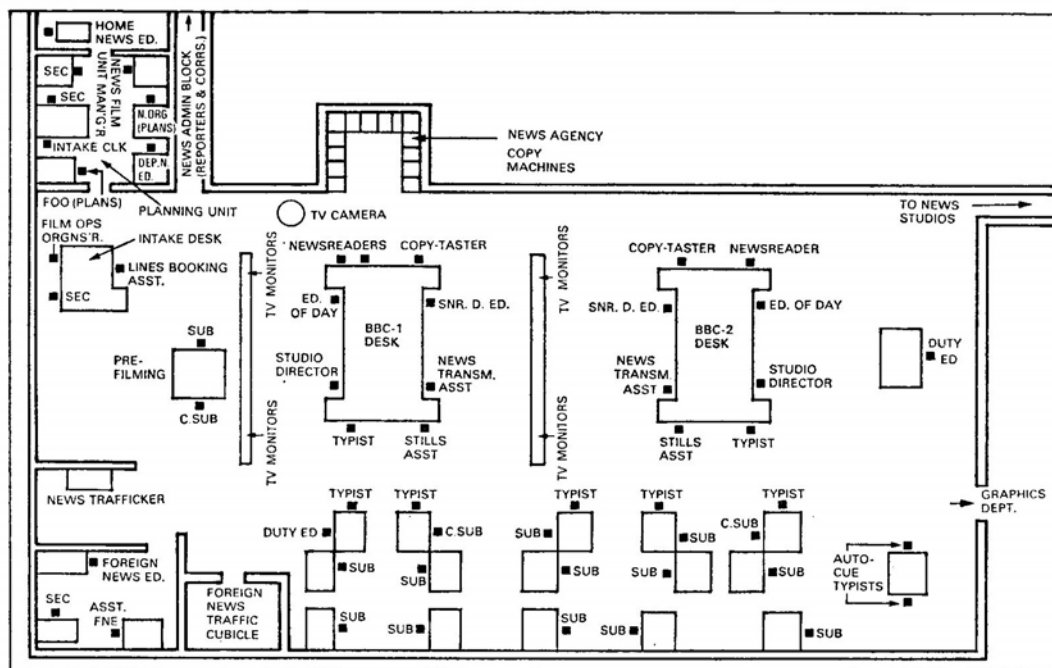
A news making operation is a time-dependent and precision process requiring a great degree of coordination between different sections and persons within the news department responsible for making the story. Illustration 7 (source: Schlesinger, 1987, p. 55) shows the spatial arrangement necessary for timely news editing at the BBC. The

center-piece of the newsroom is the desk.<sup>121</sup> Sitting in a position where they can communicate not only among themselves, but easily with the rest of the newsroom, are the Editor of the Day, Senior Duty Editor, and the Studio Director, the three key editorial management positions for the BBC news. They are supported by the copy taster, news transmission assistant, stills assistant and a typist. Lastly, the newsreader is also included on the BBC desk.

Keeping in mind that most news is planned and usually dealt with in the daily meetings, the role of a desk is primarily to shape daily output of already existing or ‘diaried’ stories. When a story breaks outside of those already flagged for production, the desk decides whether it is strong enough to go into a bulletin, and if it is, the desk handles its early production (checking for existing material, assigning a reporter, etc.) as the story enters the production cycle.

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<sup>121</sup> In Schlesinger’s diagram, the newsroom has two desks, one for BBC-1, one for BBC-2.



*Figure 3.2: The Television Newsroom*

#### Illustration 7: BBC Newsroom and desk

CCTV-9 had a system that was similar in many respects to that of the BBC. The equivalent position to Editor of the Day was the zhubian. The director was something of a cross between the Senior Duty Editor and Studio Director. The emphasis on planning through daily and weekly meetings was similar, as was the stress on coordination. However, CCTV-9's senior personnel were not physically organized around a desk and management's attempt to introduce an Assignment Desk to begin to address this problem was derailed for reasons already discussed. Moreover, in a departure from the norm, news editorial at CCTV-9 was not centralized, but scattered throughout several parts of the CCTV building.

In part this was the result of the history of the CCTV building, which is a multi-storey edifice that was clearly designed before the efficiency of open plan offices for

news production was realized. Inside, the building is a rabbits' warren of tiny offices, without the clustered production segments that are functional to news production. A centralized production space big enough for the needs of the channel was simply not available in the building. The structure of news editorial at CCTV-9 also reflected the evolution of the channel as it grew from its roots in the English News to become CCTV International (see p. 82).

However, even when CCTV-9 was given the chance to re-model its newsroom with the May 2004 relaunch, the result again was a set of enclosures, this time with glass walls, rather than an open plan office that would have facilitated communication. Despite the refurbishment of the editorial space and the relocation of the general newsroom to the second floor adjacent to the studio and MCR (master control room, which controlled playout), CCTV-9 did not establish a centralized news editorial and processing system centered on a desk. Moreover, the separation of different elements of editorial on different floors was retained. Hence the spatial arrangement of the CCTV-9 editorial system appeared quite different to that of the BBC, when it was diagrammed (Illustration 8).

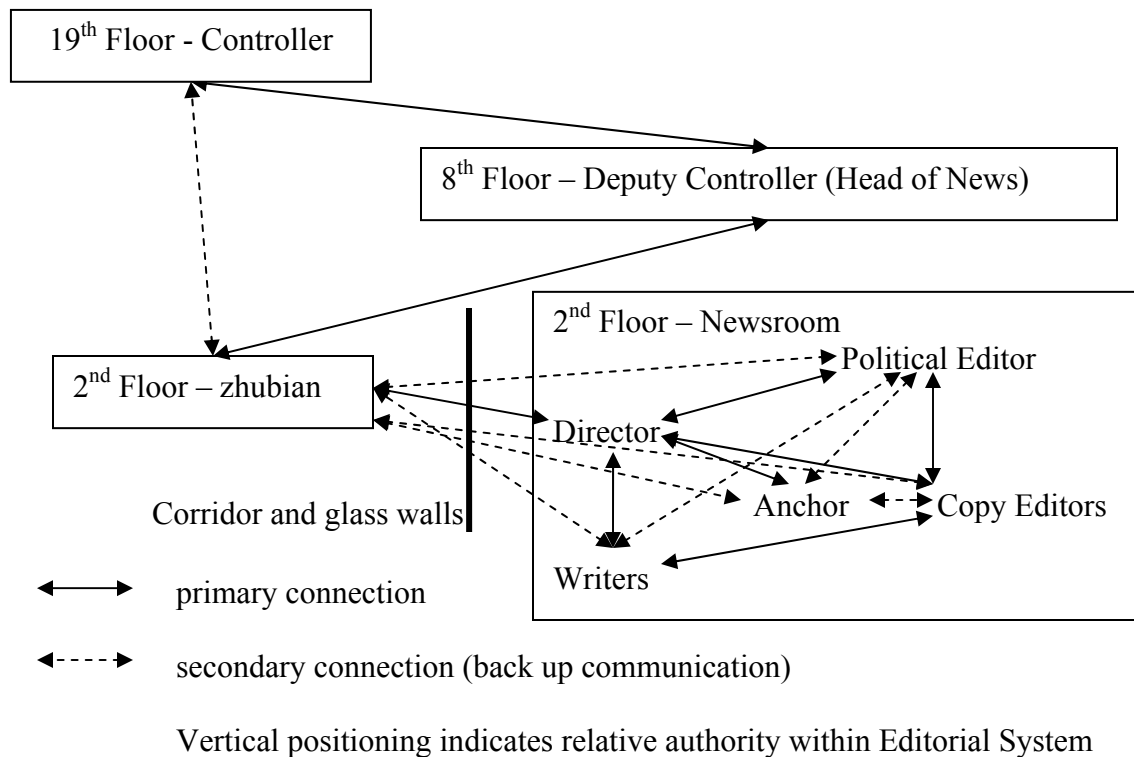


Illustration 8: Spatial representation of the CCTV-9 editorial system

The disjointed character of the editorial and as a result the production system was further evident in the multiple roles some staff were called on to play. The Controller and Deputy Controllers nominally shared an office on the 19th floor, although the Deputy Controller (Head of News) preferred to work out of the offices of Asia Today, a specialist news program he had taken an interest in developing and was anchoring. However, his absence from the 19th floor and its direct line to the general newsroom frustrated the zhubians, who reported directly to him. The Head of News was a seasoned journalist and established anchor. But from the point of view of the zhubians, his key role should have been leadership of the general news. The Deputy Controller (Head of News) was in an

impossible position. As one of the channel's leading anchors, his expertise was valued at Asia Today, especially given the problem of finding Chinese whose English was good enough to anchor. However, from an editorial point of view, he was unable to be in more than one place at a time, and this created problems for the zhubians.

Meanwhile, the zhubians had their own problems. They had an office adjacent to the newsroom, but it was separated from the newsroom by a corridor and glass partitions, rendering direct (eye-to-eye) communication between the zhubian and the director (and writers) impossible. The importance of face-to-face communication in news making should not be discounted, as an effective newsroom is one centered on efficient communication. In short, in an institution whose role is communication and that depends on communication, a general failure of communication was one of the most vexing problems for staff at every level at CCTV-9:

[Jirik] Is the system you work in, do you find it efficient?

[zhubian] I couldn't say it's efficient enough, because you know, I think now we have, each one have a specific duty about the work, but maybe there is some problem between the, I mean the communication different people of different positions... I think that's the main problem, communication.

[Jirik] Is the way we produce the news, in the newsroom, is it organized efficiently?

[writer] No.

[Jirik] What's wrong with it?

[writer] First, there should be improvements in the structure, and then there should be more training to the staff, and then there should be more effective communication, none, there should be unity, a unified spirit to lead the team as a news channel.

Both before and after the May 2004 relaunch, staff raised with management the role of the spatial arrangement of the editorial operation for resolving time-related issues



of news making associated with coordination. Appendix 9 (p. 579) is an email and attachment I sent management in November 2004 in an attempt to revive the Assignment Desk, following its demise in the wake of the relaunch. However, by then, the government audit (see p. 289) of CCTV was underway, and issues concerning pay and conditions had pushed editorial development into the background.

In the absence of a spatially centralized news editorial system, whether having one would have improved communication in the newsroom is a moot point. However, one result of the relaunch was a sense among the zhubians and directors that they were under more pressure. In the introduction to this chapter, I noted that the number of hours of on-air general news (Asian News (pre-relaunch), CCTV News, News Updates (post-relaunch), WWW) was almost the same pre- and post-relaunch. Yet zhubians and directors I interviewed consistently complained of greater pressure:

[Jirik] Did your work change after the relaunch? Do you work harder or less hard?

[director] Harder, harder, yeah.

[Jirik] How much harder?

[director] I mean physically harder.

[Jirik] And has your pay gone up?

[director] definitely not.

[Jirik] Has your pay gone down?

[director] Yeah.

[Jirik] Really, why?

[director] Everybody got pay cut, I mean the total pay, yeah, I guess.

[Jirik] Why?

[director] Because they won't give the money, because you know the resource, we have the more program, more people and maybe the result is just divided you know evenly to other people.

[Jirik] So, you're working harder and getting paid less, how do you feel?

[director] Of course, not happy. But that's the way, you know the bottom line is you take it you leave it, and CCTV nobody invites you to work here, and if you go, just go. Nobody will say don't go. This kind of thing.

One explanation for the sense of increased work post-relaunch could have been frustration due to the cut in pay triggered by the audit. However, one aspect of the production process did change, which suggests another, at least partial, explanation. Before the relaunch, the news teams handled nine bulletins of news a day. After the relaunch, the teams handled fourteen bulletins a day, a 56% increase, although seven of the fourteen bulletins post-relaunch were fifteen minute News Updates. The increase in the number of bulletins decreased the down time between bulletins, from two hour breaks to one hour breaks in most cases, which may have increased the sense of pressure, even if the actual amount of news being produced hardly changed pre- and post-relaunch. Moreover, zhubians and directors, who had responsibility for monitoring potential news, recognizing news and oversight of the production process and play-out may have experienced the lack of down time more acutely than writers, who were essentially producing the same number of stories pre- and post-relaunch.

### *Use of repeat stories & 3rd party sources*

Along with routinization through space and time, the second characteristic manner of ensuring the institutionalization of efficiency in the news making process was maximization of the use of resources, which was reflected in the use of repeat stories and use of third party source materials.

One manner in which the zhubians and directors controlled the constant deadline pressure and managed the workload on the writers and on themselves was to run repeat stories in successive bulletins, only updating and introducing a minimum of new stories. Given the lack of proactive news editing at CCTV-9 discussed in the previous chapter, I would characterize one of the key roles of the zhubian and director in charge of any particular bulletin as finding the exact balance between new stories and repeat stories to give each bulletin the ‘look’ and ‘feel’<sup>122</sup> of newness, while reducing new stories to the minimum possible.<sup>123</sup> However, given that a global broadcaster needs to cycle each story through successive bulletins to maximize the changing audience for any given story as the world turns, the practice of repeating stories was necessary.<sup>124</sup> One of the skills of a good producer or zhubian was to determine just how strong a story was and therefore how long it should run before taking it out of the twenty-four hour news cycle.

Along with the use of repeat stories, a second feature of the maximization of resources at CCTV-9 was heavy reliance on third party material for news. Although I discuss the consequences of this for the bulletin in Chapter 11: Content, I want to note here that observation and the survey of content indicated that little went into the news except stories from other channels within CCTV, primarily CCTV-1 and CCTV-4, and the international news agencies. The reporters’ group within CCTV-9 (see Chapter 10: Reporters) provided most of the remainder.

In effect, CCTV News was primarily a translation service for existing CCTV news stories in Chinese and written from scripts provided by Reuters and APTN, who

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<sup>122</sup> The more a news editor internalized the templates and rhythms of news making, the more these characteristics of what Bourdieu would call the ‘journalistic field’ would appear as subjective characteristics of the mastery of news making.

<sup>123</sup> At one point, a director earned a certain notoriety within the channel for not updating or introducing a single new story during an overnight shift. Management either did not notice, or elected to let the incident pass without comment, as nothing was ever said to the director.

<sup>124</sup> For analysis and discussion of repeat stories, see Chapter 11: Content.

also provided natural sound video. A writer summed up this dependency: “[i]f If you are not a field reporter, you just translate the scripts from the Chinese channel, or not, or from the AP or Reuters, you have a quite limited ability to handle the pictures, to handle the information.”

The heavy reliance on third party news on CCTV-9 was the result of historical conditions under which the channel developed (see p. 82). Despite the expansion of the channel, from a single 15-minute bulletin of news in 1986 to a 24-hour rolling service with news at the top of every hour in May 2004, it still remained a translation service for news produced elsewhere. CCTV-9 has historically and understandably focused its recruitment efforts on finding good English speakers. That situation has never changed at CCTV-9. If new staff recruited for their English skills develop into quality journalists, CCTV-9 considered that a bonus. In the meantime, the need remained for an editorial system that could be relied on to put politically correct news to air. Hence the continued reliance on sources like CCTV-1 and *Xinhua* for the general news service. Relying on CCTV-1 material was editorially sound and efficient. Moreover, in the absence of a professionalized journalistic corpus writing the news, politically reliable scripts were required, which CCTV-1 and *Xinhua* guaranteed.

### ***Internet use in the newsroom***

One addendum should be made concerning the limited range of sources on which CCTV-9 relied for its news. Although the internet is invisible in what goes to air, writers noted that it had become an increasingly important source of additional information for stories from CCTV, *Xinhua* or the agencies (and other sources) assigned by the director. This was in noticeable contrast to the situation I encountered at CCTV in 1999, when I wrote my MA Thesis. I wrote at the time, “[o]ne development worth noting is the

increasing use of the Internet as a news editing tool. Though this is still in its infancy at the English news.” At the time, I and the other copy editors at the English News would regularly check facts in stories against information available online. However we noticed that the Chinese staff were still reluctant to use the medium:

[Jirik] The foreign experts use the Internet a lot. But the rest of the newsroom doesn’t seem to. Why?

[senior management] The first reason is that they are not accustomed to it. And the second reason is that *Xinhua* is more official. They feel safe using *Xinhua*. When we use the Internet, we’re not so certain about the wires, whether they are usable or not. (Jirik, 2000)

In contrast to reluctance in 1999, in 2004 the medium had become an indispensable newsroom tool from writers through to the zhubians:

[Jirik] How do you know when there’s a breaking story.

[zhubian] It depends on the internet and maybe CNN or BBC, or *Xinhua* agency.

[Jirik] Do you use the Internet a lot?

[zhubian] Yes.

[Jirik] Why?

[zhubian] The Internet is very powerful. It can give you different aspects of the issue, because you cannot understand everything. You know it’s very important, you can just get more information.

[Jirik] How important is the internet for your work?

[writer] Kind of very important.

[Jirik] Why?

[writer] Because our system is not first in time, and second, it’s not diverse, even ‘lou tou’ [Reuters] we believe in ‘lou tou’ and we believe in AP [Associated Press], but I do find sometimes, especially AP, the story they feed, you can tell the writers at that time is not in the mood, or he may confuse himself... So this time you got to find out what is really going. That’s fastest in time, diverse.

[Jirik] When you're writing, what are the chief sources that you use for your stories?

[writer] *Xinhua* news agency, and other western AP, AFP, Reuters, CNN, BBC, but BBC not now. BBC has been censored, blocked on the internet.

[Jirik] How important is the internet for your work?

[writer] The internet is every day must for me, because without internet you don't know, you have, you only have one source to write a story, it's not, it's not enough.

Observation suggested however that for the staff at all levels the internet was a primary source of private information (email, browsing, etc.) and only a secondary source of information for news. They would go online to check facts or find additional data on a story assigned from one of the limited range of video sources, unless the story was strong enough to go to air without video as a 'copy' story. Perhaps for the zhubians, whose work I could not observe at close range over time, the internet had become a news editing tool. However, even if the internet indicated a breaking story that was strong enough to broadcast, no zhubian would run that story unless the online source was a recognized news source such as one of the international news agencies, or confirmed by *Xinhua*.

## **Summary**

In this section, I have looked at time and space in the routinization of news production, the role of sources in news making and their relationship to the institutionalization of editorial oversight. Despite the increasing use of the internet as a secondary tool in news making, CCTV-9 relied on an extremely limited range of sources for its news, primarily CCTV for domestic and foreign policy stories and APTN and Reuters for foreign news, with *Xinhua* and the reporting group providing the bulk of the remainder. Most of the general news was produced in the newsroom by the general news teams. In the following section, I look at the actual process that went into making a story.

## THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

### Story selection

In the production process, the first step was story selection. Story selection was typically the task of the zhubian, although the power of the director, due to their position at the center of the production process (see p. 268, p. 316) lent them inordinate authority in selecting stories, since they could slot stories into the line-up and only check with the zhubian after the fact. Bracketing this peculiarity of CCTV-9, most stories were self-selecting in so far as they had to be drawn from the sources discussed above. The chief task of the zhubian and director was to choose from the available pool of primarily CCTV and agency material what material to air.

### Writing

Writers would be assigned stories by the director and told whether to produce a 'copy,' 'take' or 'story.' Unless it was a copy story, the source for domestic and foreign policy news would almost certainly be an existing story from CCTV, which came in the form of a packaged audio-visual narrative from a prior broadcast on another channel such as *Xinwen Lianbo* on CCTV-1 and required translation from the Chinese. If it was foreign news, the story was delivered by the agencies as a 'loosely'<sup>125</sup> edited natural sound package, accompanied by an English-language script. In the case of a copy story, a writer would be handed an existing story from CCTV1, *Xinhua*, the agencies, or occasionally another source such as China Daily and asked to write a single paragraph story.

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<sup>125</sup> The agencies deliver self-cover stories that are usually 2-4 minutes long. They are loosely edited with extra material in shots to give broadcasters some control over the re-editing process. However, a proportion of agency material is 'up-picked' from broadcasters, in which case the agencies, rather than run a voiced story, either up-pick a natural sound version of the story from the broadcaster or strip off the audio track if possible and replace it with generic audio from an audio library. The working practices of the agencies no less than those of the broadcaster give lie to the concept that television news is a recording rather than a construction of reality.

The task of writing was time constrained, but if a deadline was not looming was as easy or hard as the writer wanted it to be. One writer described the difference this way, which my observation of the newsroom did not confirm. I suspect had I interviewed the entire newsroom, each person might have considered themselves the hard working one:

[writer] The truth is, people here, they are not motivated, they are not, they do not have enough incentive to work for good news. I say can't all of them. But most of them.

[Jirik] Why aren't they motivated?

[writer] I don't know.

[Jirik] Not enough money? Or is simply not clear what they're meant to be doing.

[writer] I don't know, people just come here, work, to work, and then they go. But for me, I think, news, the devotion, the kind of what, the passion of devotion is really really important. But I can see very very few people around have this kind of passion or devotion. Just come here for the sake of, this is a job, and got to do it and go home, I have kids, I have a family, I have whatever things I need to do.

The sense that news writing was 'just a job' for the majority of writers was only partially borne out by observation. If some had a lackadaisical attitude, most seemed committed to making the best news possible under the circumstances. But the circumstances varied. Restrictions on domestic and foreign policy news and reliance on the agencies in foreign news bred cynicism. My own attitude was one of ambivalence. I despised the censorship and was troubled by self-censorship (including my own), but I enjoyed the news making process. From management down, most of the Chinese staff seemed to have a similar attitude, a sense of trying to make the best of a far from perfect situation.

Once a story had been given to them by the director, some writers combed the archives and internet for additional material. In many cases, this meant checking APTN versions of Reuters' stories and Reuters' versions of APTN stories. In the case of a



domestic or foreign policy story, a writer could go to the Reuters and AP wires (both of which were available in the newsroom) or the internet for background or additional information that might be missing from the CCTV-1 or *Xinhua* stories. Less experienced and less concerned writers (perhaps the cleverest and most cynical writers!) simply translated or transcribed the texts that had been given them, regardless of the content, which in the case of *Xinwen Lianbo* stories could be awful. In the case of stories that amounted to little more than ‘Party Publicity,’ writers would simply translate the *Xinhua* or CCTV-1 material, as much out of boredom as concern not to make a political mistake.

In Appendix 10, I provide a single example of each of the forms of story noted above: copy, take video, story, chosen at random. The three stories are unremarkable, although I did make a note to myself on first reading the Hong Kong story during the coding process for content analysis that it was “stunningly patronizing”. Both the copy and the take story were translated from CCTV. The writer story is from Reuters. The copy story reiterates the PRC’s political oversight of Hong Kong. The take story is a soft foreign policy story that plays to humanitarian concerns. The writer story is about the attempt of the Palestinian Authority to have the International Court of Justice at The Hague declare illegal the wall Israel is building, part of which is in the occupied territories.

Depending on the type of story and their own interest, a writer could spend as little time on a story as it took to translate a *Xinhua* paragraph for a copy story, or as long as time permitted. On a bulletin with few new stories a writer might be responsible for a single story. Depending on the number of staff on site, and on the number of new stories in a bulletin, a writer would typically handle one to three stories per bulletin. Once a writer had finished a story it was saved in the system and passed on to the copy editors.

## Copy editing

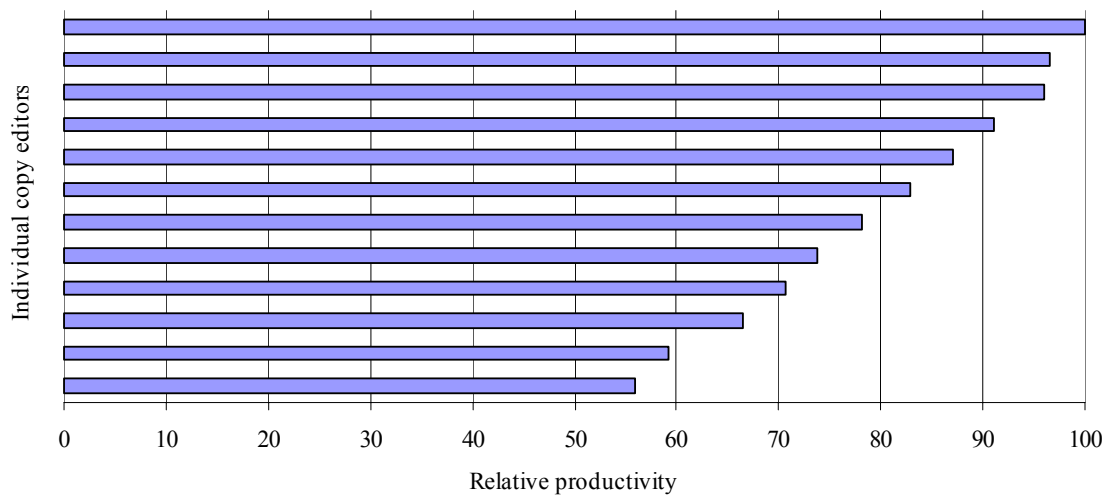
The copy editing process for each story typically took several minutes to perhaps twenty minutes at the most, although different copy editors worked at different speeds. Moreover, a well written or poorly written story could take much longer, as such stories would often involve negotiation with the writer and/or political editor. Figure 5 shows the relative productivity during August 2005 of the staff copy editors, including myself, which I measured using a scale I developed and describe in Appendix 11 (p. 594). The average copy editor dealt with 13.6 items per shift (regardless of type), or 1.9 items per hour.

The large discrepancy in productivity between different copy editors led to minor problems in the newsrooms, with some tension among the copy editors and writers and reporters quietly vying for the attention of particular copy editors.<sup>126</sup> The writing and copy editing process is illustrated in Appendix 12 (p. 597) which shows the editing process – writer, copy editor, political editor – on a single story. The story is Beslan, which was the subject of the temporary injunction on reporting (see p. 280) issued by SARFT on September 1, 2004 after the 1900 bulletin of World Wide Watch. The injunction was lifted mid-afternoon the following day after the PRC Foreign Ministry commented on the situation (see p. 281). Given the processing of agency video described above, an injunction on a foreign story with no obvious PRC angle was a rarity. So this script is a good example of an anomaly for CCTV-9, a foreign story that was shaped to show Chinese perspective.

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<sup>126</sup> The more productive copy editors were aware that they were doing more work than some of their peers, who were earning the same salary and benefits. Senior management joked that I was “not a good communist” for suggesting that something ought to be done to recognize the obviously different levels of skill, experience and productivity that separated the copy editors, who all had the same pay and conditions. I responded that on those grounds, none of the Chinese on staff were good communists given that their salary and conditions system was structured in terms of seniority, responsibility and skill. ‘Guanxi’ also appeared to play a role in the promotion system.

Figure 5: Relative productivity of the copy editors at CCTV-9



The script indicates at a number of levels the sensitivity of the story. The writer minimizes attention on the victims and the perpetrators, and instead focuses on the role the Russian government was playing in handling the crisis. The writer was working off an APTN script, but references *Xinhua*. The focus of the story became a visit to the scene by Russia’s President Vladimir Putin. The work of the copy editor did nothing to change the orientation of the story. The narrative was tightened, and the melodrama toned down with the words “... shadows didn’t seem to clear away” removed from the script.

### Political editing

As already noted the primary task of the political editor was to prevent political mistakes going to air. On the Beslan story, in a nod to the professionalism of the copy editor, the political editor only made one change, to reference a Russian government source on the death toll, rather than *Xinhua*, suggesting the writer had been overly cautious in their treatment of the story. As for their role, as foreigners copy editors were often working blind when a story dealt with political nuances or Chinese language sources. In the following example (Illustration 9) of the work of the political editor, a

mistake by a copy editor is removed from a set of headlines, all of which copy editors were responsible for writing.

In this case, the copy editor included the term ‘China’s’ in front of Panchen Lama. According to the copy editor, he was attempting to distinguish between the Panchen Lama chosen by the Dalai Lama, who is a non-person in the PRC, and the Panchen Lama installed by the Chinese government, to whom this story refers. However, unbeknownst to the copy editor, any reference in the PRC to the Dalai Lama’s choice of Panchen Lama is forbidden. Removing the word ‘China’s’ may appear to be a trivial change. But by so doing the political editor saved the copy editor and the channel from the possibility of criticism by removing any potential inference that the government-endorsed Panchen Lama is not the only one. Given the unlikelihood that the mistake would have been picked up by the censor (CPD), this level of attention to the possibility of putting to air politically incorrect news indicated the level of editorial caution and self-censorship that was at work at CCTV-9. From the PRC’s point of view, the political editor was simply correcting a mistake, since for the PRC government the Dalai Lama’s choice of Panchen Lama is not the Panchen Lama at all.

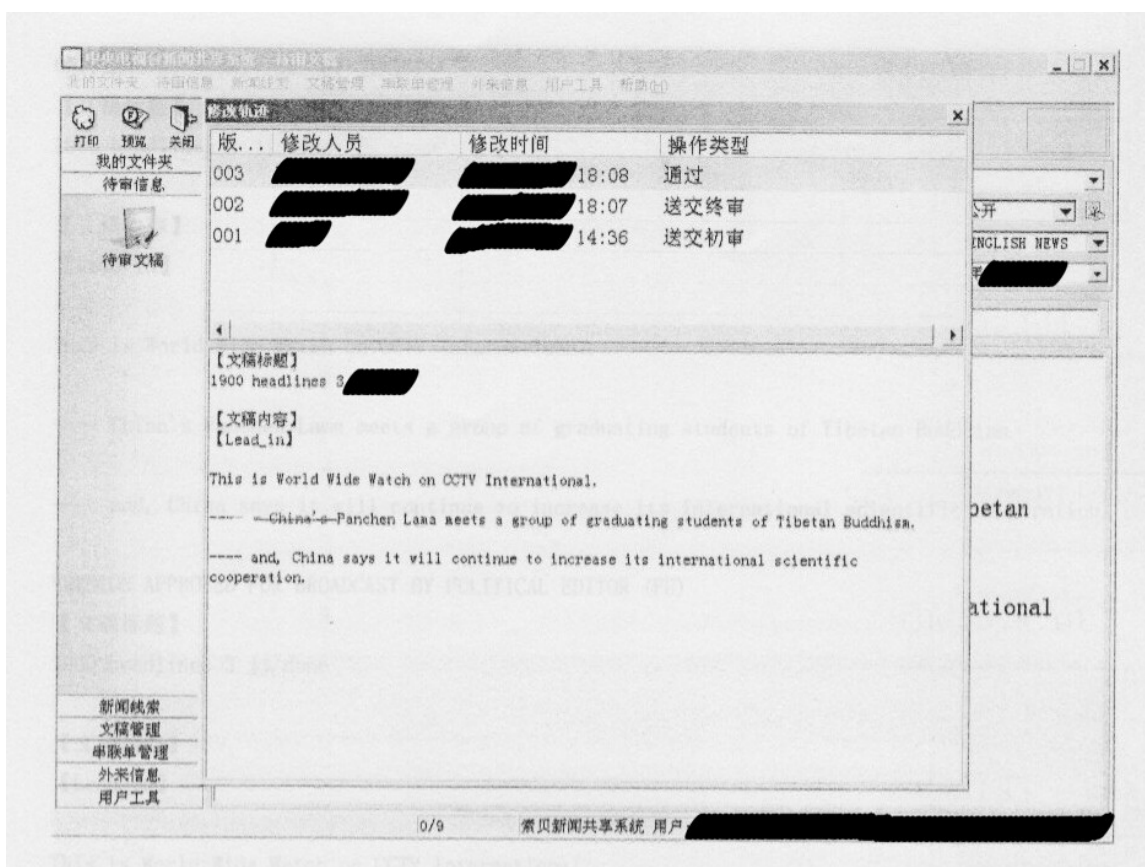


Illustration 9: Example of political editor correcting copy editor's mistake (source: CCTV-9)

Mistakes of this nature were rare, given the level of self-censorship among writers, reporters and copy editors. More typically, the political editors spent most of their time correcting factual and grammatical errors in the writers' work that had been missed by the less experienced copy editors. Although the focus on spelling and grammar, except in on air graphics, may have seemed out of place in television news, the re-use of some of the scripts on CCTV-9's website meant the work had to be done, even if only a small percentage of the scripts were published. However, it would have been more efficient to have a copy editor check the scripts for the internet. A more compelling explanation for the obsession with writing at CCTV-9 points to the backgrounds of most

of the staff, including the foreigners, few of whom had any formal training or experience of making television prior to working at CCTV-9. Most of the writers, copy editors and political editors were either uncomfortable or unfamiliar with the grammar and syntax of television narrative and the aesthetics of television news. As a result, they tended to focus on what they were more comfortable with, writing, but not writing to pictures (see below), which is the essence of making television news.

### **Video editing**

In a departure from the norm in many broadcast newsrooms, the writers and reporters at CCTV-9 were responsible for their own video editing, which was the case even before the digitization of newsrooms in general, which is changing the practice of treating writing/reporting and video editing as two distinct tasks. At both NBC and Reuters when I was working there, video editing was a specialist's task. Although this is changing in many cases with budgetary cuts and technological developments pushing more and more writers, producers and reporters worldwide to also learn how to edit video, in the pre-digital era video editing tended to be a separate and highly valued function within the news making system.

In this regard, I believe the Chinese practice was in principle a good idea, since video editing is arguably the core task of making television news, since it is in the video editing process that the story is assembled. A writer/reporter who edited their own video would have control over the story in a manner exceeding that implied by the separation of writer/reporter and video editor.<sup>127</sup> Ironically however, few writers at CCTV-9 took advantage of their position, since, paradoxically, observation suggested that although

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<sup>127</sup> Strictly speaking, none of the ensemble of practices that go into a news story, from the work of the camera person through to the engineer who plays out the story, can be discounted in the news making process. But only after I learned to video edit at Reuters did I really begin to understand how television narrative works, although my skills were rudimentary compared to those of specialist video editors.

they were working in an audiovisual medium, they paid more attention to writing than to how a story looked and sounded.

Few of the writers at CCTV-9 were skilled video editors. But for the most part, staff were not to blame. When I raised with management the issue of training staff to video edit, a Deputy Controller told me that he did not consider video important, so long as the viewer could hear what was being said. In short we were discussing not television but radio with pictures. That this particular manager had a radio background was only part of the problem. Because the writers were recruited for their English skills, primarily from English-language departments at universities, they too focused on what they were good at, rather than learning how to make television, which is a craft that combines visual elements, natural sound and the spoken word. As a result, video editing, which should have been the heart of the story making process, was approached with trepidation rather than confidence.

I convinced management to let me teach basic video editing to intern writers. I focused on the interns, because most of the writers could not be spared down time. Moreover, a culture of helping one another out operated in the newsroom, and writers were constantly showing one another new insights they had discovered into Sobey.<sup>128</sup> In my training, I attempted to teach the core skill of television making, the art of writing to pictures, with the simplest phrase: “never put in the script what is already in the pictures.”

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<sup>128</sup> CCTV-9 was integrated into CCTV’s non-linear digital news production system, Sobey, which was shared by the other news channels at CCTV. Sobey is a Chengdu-based technology company that develops and manufactures non-linear editing and integrated scripting and playout systems for broadcasters (Anon., 2003a, 2005b). The Japanese media giant Sony has a stake in Sobey (Anon., 2003a). At the core of the video editing component of the Sobey system was hardware developed by Matrox, a Canadian company (Anon., 2004). The international character of the suppliers of the infrastructure of the PRC’s broadcasting technology provides an ironic counterpoint to the control exercised over the editorial system. In contrast to the criticism companies such as Cisco Systems, Google, Microsoft and Yahoo have encountered for contributing to censorship of the internet in the PRC (Biggs, 2006), technology companies supplying broadcast media with equipment have escaped censure, perhaps because broadcast censorship is usually understood as a regulatory rather than a technical issue.

But I was hindered in an environment where the written and spoken word were accorded a greater weight than video in the news making process.

Moreover, even when writers produced aesthetically pleasing packages, at times they would then be frustrated by copy editors and political editors, some of whom knew almost nothing about video editing, who would change scripts that writers had written to match specific pictures, resulting in packages where the video and textual narratives no longer synchronized. In a further sign of the lack of importance accorded video and a lack of understanding of television, at times the copy and political editors obsessed over nuances in scripts and grammatical and spelling errors that were invisible in voiced packages, while paying almost no attention to how their changes might affect the video narrative.

## **Review**

The only part of the production process where any oversight over video was exercised was in the case of review, another task of the zhubian. As the person who was responsible for what went to air on their shift, each zhubian was tasked to review all video before it was broadcast. The zhubians had different attitudes to the writers, some being more sympathetic than others to poorly edited stories. Sometimes they would ask writers to redo elements, sometimes sections or in extreme cases, an entire edit. The zhubian would also pick out any politically incorrect imagery – for example a Taiwan flag that might have escaped the writer during the video editing process – and have it replaced with something neutral, rather than remove it, which would require the story to be re-voiced. Once a zhubian was satisfied with a story, the tape was passed to the director and slotted into the lineup for broadcast.



## **Summary**

Although the preceding section has focused on the minutiae of news making, I hope it has captured something of the process that went into turning source materials supplied by third parties into stories for broadcast, which constituted most of CCTV-9's news production. The system was highly regimented, worked to a steady rhythm and went on around the clock. From interviews and observation, clearly most of the writers, copy editors and political editors had no knowledge of television prior to joining CCTV-9. In the processing of primarily third party materials for broadcast, video was seen as the least important element in comparison with the written and spoken word. In short, the news production process at CCTV-9 was not driven by visuals, the 'strength of the pictures,' but by the availability of third party video, and a focus on the written and spoken word that was out of place in television.

## **THE FAILURE TO HANDLE BREAKING NEWS**

As already noted, without a desk to coordinate news monitoring and gathering at CCTV-9, zhubians were largely reduced to news editing from already available material. This was not a problem in dealing with the majority of news, the 'olds,' since the stories were already running and editorial would be aware of them from existing run downs or the stories would have been in the diary and arrangements would have been made to cover them. However, because of the history of the channel as a translation service, the news editing process was the reverse of what one would find at broadcasters such as the BBC-WS or CNN-I. There, the primary moment-to-moment news editing tools are the AP and Reuters wires or APTN and Reuters video feeds or live video if it is available

from their own sources or similar 24-hour news channels.<sup>129</sup> Once a story is spotted on either the text or video wires, then the desks first check with available sources such as the agencies or partner broadcasters whether they will have the story, and if not organize access to the video from a third party, or send a crew out for self cover.

In an appraisal in August 2004 of the channel's development following the May 2004 relaunch, News Corporation's consultant praised CCTV-9's ability to deliver scheduled stories: "during the past two years, and particularly since the War in Iraq, CCTV News has demonstrated a tremendous on-air capability in its coverage of important news stories (i.e., the 6-Way Party Talks, the Chinese space shot, etc.)." However, he also criticized the CCTV News for a lack of timeliness on breaking stories. Although the consultant offered a number of suggestions to solve this problem, observation of newsroom practice suggested to me that on breaking stories, reliance on existing video resulted in CCTV-9 being constantly 'behind the story' since the zhubians and directors would not pro-actively seek video after spotting a story on the wires, but reactively news edit stories after they had been delivered, whether sourced from CCTV or the agencies.

Even with access to the full *Xinhua*, Reuters and AP wires<sup>130</sup> in the newsroom, news editing from existing lineups of domestic news from CCTV-1 and from rundowns of Reuters and APTN feeds and scripts sent with the video feed was the norm. CCTV-9 zhubians almost never contacted Reuters and APTN to chase video that would complement a wire story, whether on *Xinhua*, Reuters or AP. As a former Reuters

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<sup>129</sup> My experience at NBC and Reuters suggests to me that the text wires are almost always faster than 24-hour video wires like CNN. Only when a camera is already in place, can a video story be delivered faster than a text story.

<sup>130</sup> The Reuters text wire was added to the newsroom computer system on March 23, 2004. The AP wire was added some time later. I do not have the date.

producer, a role which involved news editing and handling client requests for video, I found the practice at CCTV-9 of not chasing stories extremely frustrating.

Whenever I was copy editing, I would constantly monitor the wires, a habit from my previous work. Whenever I spotted a story on the wire that I considered newsworthy but that was not on the bulletin, I would point it out to the director or zhubian on duty, and often these stories would then go onto the bulletin. But this was not the task of a copy editor. Although most of the zhubians welcomed my input, I also realized that I was causing them problems, by increasing their workload, if not by drawing attention to their own inability or failure to chase stories. Following is a typical entry from my diary:

Sunday, July 4, 2004

Copy editing. A quiet day. [X] was zhubian. Gave him a wire Reuters ran on China about heat wave killing 39 in Guangzhou, sourced from *Beijing Youth Daily*. *China Daily* ran it as a page one banner headline story on Monday [the following day]. We had it on the [Sunday] 2100 and 0000 bulletins. But I doubt, had I not handed it to him, we would have had it at all. Another case of what is wrong with our news editing system.

Editing from the existing video was a structural feature of the news editing system that no amount of prodding from me to pay more attention to the wire could change. Probably the best example of how story selection failed in the case of breaking stories during the period I collected data was CCTV-9's handling of the Indian Ocean Tsunami on December 26, 2004.

I was scheduled to work as a copy editor that Sunday afternoon and had noticed the story on the internet early that morning while at home. When I arrived at work at 4pm, I noticed that the rundown for the specialist news show Asia Today (at 2000, Beijing Time) had as the top story a foreign policy photo opportunity of President Hu Jintao meeting the chairman of the Kazakhstan Senate. The tsunami story was running second. However, by that time, *Xinhua* was already reporting at least one hundred and

fifty dead in Sri Lanka, and by 5pm it also had at least sixty dead in Indonesia. The Reuters wire was running at least one thousand dead in India and at least fifty-five dead in Thailand. In short, this was clearly a major breaking regional story, but the producer of Asia Today, the bulletin that focused on the region the tsunami had hit, was running it second after a foreign policy story of no discernible merit.

I also noticed that World Wide Watch, which was handled by the general news department, was running the tsunami story at the top of its bulletin (1900). Following is my diary note:

Sunday, December 26th, 2004

When I arrived at work I checked the lineup to see that [X] was putting a Hu Jintao meeting top of Asia Today, when the region had been hit by a tsunami earlier in the day. I suggested to [Y], WWW zhubian, who had the tsunami top story, she ought say something to [X].

Failure to news edit the tsunami story developed into something of a fiasco at CCTV-9. The failure of the Asia Today producer to run the story at the top of the bulletin not only reflected a rule of thumb that stories about President Hu Jintao would top any bulletin in which they appeared,<sup>131</sup> but more generally a failure to proactively news edit. The tsunami was ‘missed’ by the Asia Today producer because of a general tendency among the directors and zhubians of the general news and the producers of specialist news to ignore the wires and not pay attention to breaking and developing stories, for which video had not yet been delivered by CCTV-1, CCTV-4 or the agencies.

Moreover, the news monitoring function of news editing associated with desking was weak at CCTV-9, since the May relaunch had failed to implement a fully functional

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<sup>131</sup> The zhubian who first broke this rule gleefully told me how good he felt the day he put Hu Jintao into the second half of a bulletin. Once it had been done once, some of the other zhubians began to arrange bulletin line-ups according to their sense of the merits of each story, and not according to the persons involved, unless directed ‘from above’ to put a particular story of no merit first.

Assignment Desk, which in part had been designed to boost news monitoring. Despite the obvious strength of the story from the wires, little video became available in the first hours of the tsunami, because it sometimes takes hours if not days to get camera people to breaking news sites and in this case the tsunami had wiped out so much technical infrastructure in the region that early pictures were difficult to deliver.<sup>132</sup> As a result, at CCTV-9 what would be the biggest story of the year was ignored for most of the first day.

My impression that CCTV-9 was missing a major story was borne out by developments that I noted in my diary, beginning on the following day:

Monday, December 27th, 2004

When I arrived at work, [Chinese staff] told me about a blow up in the morning, involving several senior people. Following is the thumbnail sketch:

- a) [OSC<sup>133</sup> management] rings [Head of News] in the morning and tells him:
  - i. I am disappointed with your channel.
  - ii. You need to discuss among yourselves how you are going to handle these breaking stories.
  - iii. If you don't fix the problems, I don't see a future for the channel.
- b) [Head of News] gets off the phone and blows off [OSC management's] criticism, and does nothing to change the news.
- c) [OSC management] rings [Controller] (I assume this is after he watches the next bulletin) and blasts [him].
- d) [Controller] rings [Head of News] and blasts him.
- e) Only then does [Head of News] show any interest in doing the story.

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<sup>132</sup> Once delivery began however, a number of factors such as the 'whiteness' of some victims led to a virtual deluge of imagery that has since prompted criticism for its partiality (Moeller, 2006).

<sup>133</sup> OSC – Overseas Service Center, which controlled CCTV-9.

However, in the ensuing days, the situation barely improved. Outside of general news, producers seemed more concerned with developing their ‘Year Ender’ specials, which would highlight the work their teams had done during the year than handle what already was clearly the biggest story of the year. On December 29, 2004, I wrote in my diary: “I noticed lot of work being done on the Year Enders, but no real attempt to do more than the minimum on the tsunami.” Even worse, as the extent of the loss of life and destruction to the region became evident, CCTV-9 began to report the story from the point of view of the PRC’s contribution to rescue and relief work – Chinese perspective – to my mind politicizing a tragedy that the PRC played only a small but valuable role in addressing. I was so concerned at this development in the coverage that I wrote senior management two emails (Appendix 13, p. 601), urging them to change the orientation of the coverage. In part the emails read:

[The head of the foreign experts] sent the following to the foreign experts on Saturday, as part of a note that [Senior News Producer] asked him to send following the producers’ meeting on Saturday:

“Since the crisis is so close to China and involves countries that are so geographically and politically interrelated to China in Asia, the Zhubians have also been asked to take extra special care regarding the Tsunami-related stories, staying vigilant and sensitive (including politically) to the crisis situation.”

I [Jirik] honestly think we would serve the Chinese government, people, and our viewers best if we do not politicize this story. For example, on Saturday evening, Japan announced it would provide 500 million USD in aid, the single biggest donation by any country by far (the US is second with 350 million), raising the total of donations by over 25% from 1.36 to 1.86 billion dollars. However, when I suggested this was a significant new element to the aid story, I was asked whether it was on *Xinhua*. We did not report it on 2300, or Sunday 0000. Did *Xinhua* ever report it? And why do we have to wait? If *Xinhua* did not report it, then shame on *Xinhua* too.

Finding the right balance between reporting the facts, and focusing on the Chinese angle -- what China is doing for victims -- is important to doing this story right. The fact is that China will do a lot, but it will not be able to do as much as some

other countries, regions, etc. That does not diminish China's contribution in any way. BUT, if we are to report the Tsunami story accurately, we should be accurate about who is doing what, and what is happening where...

Senior management replied to the first of the emails, stating "I fully agree with you. I've forwarded your email to all the producers." However, after two more bulletins of coverage heavily focused on the PRC's minor role in the rescue and relief work, I sent a second email reiterating that "IF you want people to respect China, the Chinese government, the Chinese people, and CCTV News on CCTV-9, then please, just do the news, the whole news, and nothing but the news." My plea fell on deaf ears, as the coverage continued to focus on the minor Chinese angle. Only when a reporter finally arrived in Thailand on Friday January 8<sup>th</sup> (almost two weeks after the event), did CCTV-9 begin to get the kind of coverage that one would expect from an international broadcaster.<sup>134</sup>

Although it was only one story, failure to news edit the tsunami story highlighted a structural problem with the CCTV-9 editing system that resulted from the historical development of the channel as a translation service for third party materials. Although the heavy dependence on third party sources and the character of news as primarily the processing of 'olds' meant that the structural flaw in the editing system was not normally exposed, when it was exposed, management and staff were at a loss as to how to respond.

Three days after the story broke, I wrote to the News Corp. consultant out of frustration:

Hi [name]. I hope this finds you well. Happy New Year. When will you be back in Beijing? I don't know whether you've been watching, but our Tsunami coverage has been terrible... As far as news goes, this is make it or break it as far

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<sup>134</sup> To be fair to CCTV-9, Moeller (2006) argues that the partiality of coverage was a general feature of broadcasts of the story, which focused on 'national' angles. As Gideon Levy observed in Israel's Ha'aretz: "Anyone watching television in the West might think the tsunami struck Sweden or Switzerland." (cited in Moeller, 2006, p. 178)

as I am concerned. I've watched them fail to news edit and cover breaking stories adequately for 18 months now, and as far as I'm concerned, enough is enough...

Best Rgds.  
John.

But despite the best efforts of senior management, who called an emergency meeting of the news producers on January 1, 2005 to discuss the failure of the coverage, and the work of the consultant to identify the problems and offer solutions, and Reuters, which made its staff available to do telephone interviews across the impacted region where CCTV could not afford to send its own reporters or access stringers' coverage, in the absence of a desk the editorial system itself was not set up to deal with breaking stories. Following is how senior management described the problem in retrospect:

Sometimes we are sort of clumsy, awkward in reporting on breaking news, like a tsunami, at the very beginning, we don't realize, we didn't realize that it's so heavy loss. It's simply like an earthquake story, ah, but bit by bit we realized that it, ah, great breaking news story. So we put more emphasis on the coverage.

[Jirik] But to my mind, the New Year, I mean I watched I was there. Everybody was so preoccupied with doing the New Year programming they were ignoring the breaking news. It seemed to me not a question of not having the information. But they literally were not interested. They were much more interested in making sure those year-enders.

[senior management] Yeah, they are occupied with the scheduled, the scheduled events, or scheduled mission. They pay little attention to the breaking news. That's the aspects we have to improve in the near future.

[Jirik] And how do you plan to do that?

[senior management] Yes, we may reorganize the Assignment Desk, to make more newsworthy, to promote the newsworthiness among the staff, to improve the quality of the personnel at the Assignment Desk.

But as already noted, the Assignment Desk never developed in the manner management had planned. As a result, CCTV-9 had no system for recognizing and chasing breaking stories. Story selection remained the result of reactive news editing,



which meant CCTV-9 handled scheduled and running stories well, but were slow to pick up on breaking stories. The tsunami story brought home to senior management shortcomings in the editorial system at CCTV-9. But it was helpless to address them as the structural problems were functional to the existing efficiency of the news editing system and process. Failure on a single story, given how little news is actually breaking news, meant that once the tsunami story began dropping down the CNN-I, BBC-WS bulletins, which I noted in my diary began around January 8, 2005, CCTV-9 could return to its familiar rhythms and style of work.

### **MY ROLE IN PRODUCTION**

How much of a problem CCTV-9's inability to handle breaking stories was is debatable. On the one hand, new stories made up only a small proportion of most broadcasts (see Figure 7, p. 407). On the other hand, as a former television news producer, I was extremely sensitive to the role breaking stories are assumed to have in the impression one has of a broadcaster, although I suspect analysis would not support that assumption.<sup>135</sup> My former colleagues had a similar opinion as the following email from the Reuters operation in Sri Lanka at the time of the tsunami indicates:

This sounds like the perfect opportunity to send a [CCTV-9] crew away [from Beijing] and do your own thing and use facilities whilst away. Particularly as this is a job that will continue to go for some time, so there is flexibility there to produce your own stylized content on the ground. Every other man and his dog is here, so why isn't CCTV-9? You guys are after all trying to be a force in this business, so get out there and show that you are. If you want to talk further, give me a call.

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<sup>135</sup> At Reuters, we would always agonize over the effect that losing out to APTN on an exclusive or being slower on a story might have on clients' perception of Reuters' service, although over the long term, the two agencies seemed to even one another out. The competitive model that governs their practices forces Reuters and APTN to match every innovation the other agency comes up with. If either APTN or Reuters is forced out of the television news business at some point in the future, the cause is unlikely to be the superiority of the other agency's coverage.

In general, staff at CCTV-9 believed they did not have the resources to compete with the likes of CNN-I and BBC-WS. But at the level of zhubian and director, there was little understanding of the role the agencies have historically played in making broadcasters appear to have a far larger news net than is the case. CCTV-9 subscribed to the same agency services that its competitors did, more so in fact as CCTV subscribed to both APTN and Reuters, which is not the norm for many broadcasters.<sup>136</sup> Staff simply did not know how to utilize the channel's relationship with the agencies to the best effect.

While I was at CCTV-9, I worked with senior management and Reuters to attempt to improve the working relationship on both sides, something which both sides wanted to see. However, both sides had unrealistic expectations of the other. Over the course of 2004 and into 2005, the two sides negotiated to try to come to a mutually beneficial relationship that would extend beyond Reuters' traditional provision of video to a more inter-active relationship, such as many broadcasters enjoy with the agencies.<sup>137</sup> Examples of that kind of relationship include almost daily telephone calls between the agencies and broadcasters and the sharing or trading off of information, video, personnel and facilities, especially on breaking stories, and under difficult circumstances in the field.

A relationship of that kind would have benefited both CCTV-9 and Reuters, and could have been extended to APTN had it worked out, further expanding CCTV-9's range. But the differences in expectation were too wide to bridge. For many reasons,

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<sup>136</sup> Agencies guard their subscriber lists, so the only way to measure who takes which agency is to survey the broadcasters. From personal experience, when I was at NBC (1991-2), NBC took Reuters only, while ABC subscribed exclusively to Worldwide Television News (later bought by AP to form APTN). CNN took both Reuters and APTN, but in August 2007 announced it was dropping Reuters. From my time at Reuters (1992-1999), my sense is that most broadcasters were realizing that the agencies provided similar enough services that they could afford to subscribe to only one without compromising their access to materials, although the occasional exclusive by one or the other agency would inevitably result in unhappy telephone calls.

<sup>137</sup> Personal experience in Moscow at NBC, which shared offices with Visnews (Reuters), and at Reuters, where I had daily contact with broadcasters across the Asian region, but rarely with CCTV.

including expectation and financial misunderstandings on both sides, the initiative failed. In part I blame myself. I was trusted by both sides to facilitate, but did not have enough understanding of what each was trying to achieve to successfully manage the relationship.

In addition, I was coming under pressure at the time from within CCTV-9 from some of the Chinese staff and foreign experts, who, for a variety of reasons,<sup>138</sup> opposed my work at the channel. Management had moved me from the copy editing pool to the Assignment Desk on February 2, 2004. As noted, I left the Assignment Desk once the extent of staff opposition to its functioning became evident to me. However, management asked me to continue working on training and production-related issues, while I returned to copy editing for my remaining shifts. Then in April 2005, management asked me to return to copy editing full time, effectively forcing me to abandon the training and production-related work I had been developing.

Ironically, management told me of the change on the same day that the kind of production-related synergies I was seeking with third parties began to pay off, although in this particular instance, I take no credit for initiating the story. A very experienced Australian sports journalist and anchor, who had joined CCTV-9, had engineered a coup and managed to get an exclusive interview with world champion swimmer, Ian Thorpe, who was in Beijing for a promotional visit ahead of the 2008 Olympics. The journalist had asked me to produce the shoot. After the interview, Thorpe's agent told me he would try to make available to CCTV-9 all of his talent who visited the PRC in the run-up to the Olympics. I believed that this interview promised to be the first of many. I later wrote in my diary about thinking how much I was beginning to enjoy working as a producer, my

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<sup>138</sup> The primary reason for misunderstandings about my work on both the Chinese and foreign side seemed to be a lack of communication between different sides, including from my side, about what management wanted me to do.

old role at Reuters, as I rode my bicycle back to the channel to do a training session with the interns after the Thorpe interview, which had taken most of the morning.

Several hours later, I received an email from senior management that stated “Most of the foreigners are complaining” that I was not pulling my weight, and that I would be returning to copy editing full time. I cancelled the training sessions, my liaison work with Reuters, other production-related work with other entities keen to work more closely with CCTV-9, emailed Thorpe’s manager that I could not work with him, and emailed management indicating that I had made the necessary adjustments to my schedule to return to copy editing. Two of the three groups I had been training immediately petitioned management to have their sessions restored, to which management agreed. But the other initiatives ended.

I believed then and I believe now at the time of writing that being pulled from work on production-related issues and on developing a better relationship between CCTV-9 and Reuters damaged CCTV-9’s development as an international broadcaster. Moreover, the decision to return me to copy editing full time felt to me like I had lost the confidence of management.

In rejoining the copy editing group, I felt defeated. I had come to CCTV-9 to do field work for a PhD dissertation. Senior management had asked me to help develop the channel, especially through the May 2004 relaunch. I have already explained in the chapter on methodology how I believe participant observation can usefully become immersion. But with immersion also comes the risk of submersion and the danger of losing oneself in one’s subject. This is perhaps what had happened to me at CCTV-9. In addition, on reflection I realized that in my enthusiasm and frustration I had breached Mao’s dictum, outlined in the epigraph to this dissertation, on the appropriate role a foreigner in my position could play in the PRC.

In the months that followed, I maintained sporadic contact with Reuters in the hope the two sides would find some synergy, and continued to work with the reporters' group and another production team I was training, the group responsible for *World Insight*, a weekly half-hour international current affairs program.<sup>139</sup> But my focus shifted again to finishing my dissertation.

## **DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

### **Discussion**

Although my experience at CCTV-9 was unique, in so far as I was the first and at the time of writing (November 2007) only foreigner appointed, albeit informally, as a producer since every foreigner on a SAFEA<sup>140</sup> contract at the time could only be hired as a 'foreign expert', most of my work was not in production, but an attempt to teach staff what I knew about making international news from my time at Reuters and prior to that, at NBC. To my mind, above all what CCTV lacked was not talented staff among the Chinese, which it had in abundance, but an understanding of how broadcasters like CNN-I and BBC-WS structure their news making operations to gain maximum efficiency from limited resources, and an editorial structure appropriate to a rolling news service.

However, I was also aware that I was working against an entrenched culture of news making at CCTV-9, which mitigated against any substantive change to the status quo, since the irony of the situation was not that the news making system at CCTV-9 did not work, but rather that because it worked so well, few people saw any need for substantive change. The system was organized, efficient and effective. However, in the absence of an editorial structure centered on a desk that would have empowered the news

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<sup>139</sup> *World Insight* would go on that year (2005) to win a CCTV Outstanding Team Award (for a photograph of the team and the award, see, Appendix 14, p 607).

<sup>140</sup> State Administration of Foreign Expert Affairs

makers, the editorial system responded reactively to events rather than proactively. Each preceding bulletin set the format for each succeeding bulletin. In effect, the bulletin was a machine that zhubians, directors, writers, copy editors and political editors only tinkered with.

The failure to news edit the tsunami story was only made worse by the attempt to inject “Chinese perspective” into a story that had no significant PRC angle, reducing CCTV-9’s coverage to the same ethnocentric representations of the event as analysis has uncovered in coverage by European broadcasters (Moeller, 2006), and I would hazard to suggest investigation would unearth in the coverage by other so-called ‘international’ channels like CNN-I and BBC-WS. However, the preponderance of planned and repeat stories on the news meant that failure to news edit a breaking story, regardless of its significance, had little consequence for the channel. Once the tsunami story began to slip down international bulletins, which happened in the second week of January 2005, then CCTV-9 was no longer glaringly ‘behind the story.’

If in Chapter 7 the passive resistance offered by staff to the institutional pressure of external agencies to shape the channel’s development was evident, and in Chapter 8, refusal was evident in the manner in which news makers retained some control over the production process at the level of editorial decision-making, in production the internal momentum of the channel was the strongest constraint on change.

Since the reconfiguration of the English News in September 2000 as CCTV-9, the channel had evolved working practices appropriate to the channel’s heavy reliance on third party materials in both domestic and foreign policy, and foreign news. To meet the requirements of a 24-hour news channel, CCTV-9 also relied heavily on repeat programming organized into four six-hour blocs in order to reach a global audience. But clearly from the attitude of staff the audience that mattered was management, and who

was watching on any given evening in Beijing. In short, staff at CCTV-9 did not believe they were making news for a global audience, so much as producing a local service with its eye very much on a local audience.

My own attempt to ‘internationalize’ CCTV-9 was to try to develop a better working relationship between CCTV-9 and Reuters. But as noted, the initiative failed. Not least, because of opposition I faced from within the channel, including from within the Editorial Board, where I was told at least one well-intentioned manager had suggested my attempt to improve the relationship between CCTV-9 and Reuters was a Trojan horse for infiltrating ‘imperialist media’ into the PRC. Given the channel’s almost complete reliance on ‘imperialist media’ for supplying their foreign news (see the following chapter), I found this claim both ironic and frustrating. However, it was a stark reminder of the mindset of some of my colleagues and of the ideological stakes at play in PRC media, especially in their ‘wai xuan’ role.

My concerns were rather more mundane. From my previous experience and from extensive discussions with News Corporation’s consultant, who, as already noted (see p. 214) was an extremely experienced news producer, both of us could see that CCTV-9 would not be able to function as a rolling news channel and compete with the likes of CNN-I and BBC-WS unless it developed a pro-active news editing system, based on an assignment desk as the heart of the news making operation.

However, I was also well aware that if CCTV-9 was to establish a desk-driven editorial system, it might impact on the channel’s function as an element of the PRC’s ‘wai xuan’ system. A desk would provide the channel with a pro-active rather than reactive editing system, foregrounding the role of the zhubian in the production system, and bringing to the position the authority traditionally associated with the news editor’s role. Although CCTV-9 would continue to function as a translation service of third party

materials, the desk would have far greater control over the manner in which third party materials were selected and processed. In addition, despite the pressure from external agencies such as the CPD and SARFT, a strong desk at CCTV-9 would have provided the channel with a locus of responsibility for the broadcast that may have empowered news makers within the 'wai xuan' system.

However, whether empowering the news makers in this manner would have facilitated or constrained the publicity function of the channel cannot be determined in advance. Perhaps in the case of a compliant zhubian on a pro-active desk the result would be even more reliable and aesthetically pleasing publicity for the Party/State. Moreover, the regulators and censors would retain the power to rein in the channel, should news makers begin to develop a sense of relative autonomy within the news making system. All that was guaranteed should CCTV-9 develop a strong desk would be an improvement in the quality of the editing system, without any guarantee as to what ends that system would be put.

If bored acceptance of the role they played in what He Zhou (2000b) calls "Party Publicity Inc." and a lack of training, which limited opportunities for advancement, at times fed staff disinterest in doing little more than the minimum necessary to keep the production process going, establishing clear leadership in the newsroom through a strong desking system could have been a first step to empowering the general news teams. That in itself would have been a step forward for editorial reform at CCTV-9, although the consequences could not have been predicted.

Given the hybrid and multi-faceted character of the CCTV-9 news, evident in the mix of sources that went into the news making process, and the range of people involved in the construction of any given story, the product of the general new teams could not automatically be assigned to either straight news or 'wai xuan.' Even in the minutiae of



the production process, the roles of the copy and political editors in shaping the work of the writers could not be guaranteed to deliver a particular angle on any given story, although the Party line was guaranteed on the vast majority of domestic and foreign policy stories through reliance on CCTV-1 and *Xinhua* for the bulk of these stories.

Limited as they were to largely working from third party sources, the agency of news makers was restricted in the production process. However, if the balance of force in the relationship between the strategies of the CPD and SARFT and the tactics of news makers left little space for maneuver, the reliance on third party sources in foreign news undermined the demand in the OSC blueprint to look at the world from a Chinese point of view. However, whether this undermined or bolstered the ‘wai xuan’ function of CCTV-9 is open to debate, since use of APTN and Reuters at CCTV-9 could only strengthen the channel’s claims as an international broadcaster, a central aim of the relaunch.

Given the strong sense of social responsibility that is the norm for news makers in the PRC, despite the sense among writers that they were not so much reporters as transcribers and translators, the newsroom was the locus of a vibrant but frustrated journalistic culture. Although for some, news making was no doubt just a job, news workers at CCTV-9 seemed not so much cynical as frustrated at the limitations put on their work. For the most part these limitations were not the result of regulation or censorship, but the result of the production system itself, the never ending momentum of the 24-hour news cycle and the reliance on third party material. Given the time to reflect on their work, and given the opportunity to explore a story, my sense is they would have put a lot of the effort that went into simply getting the job done into doing the job in a manner that reflected a greater sense of journalistic agency. But it was only in the reporting group, the focus of the next chapter, that CCTV-9’s news makers could practice

their craft in a relatively unconstrained although objectively very constrained environment.

Within the conjuncture of forces such as the CPD and SARFT that operated on the newsroom from without, and in the newsroom in everyday practice, particular news makers in the general news group had little relative autonomy. But collectively, the production process itself worked as a barrier to external interference in their work. Paradoxically, the heavy reliance on third party sources at CCTV-9 shielded the news making process from intervention, since that dependence was a result of the structural relationship between source materials and content, which could not change without massively expanding the reporting group with respect to domestic and foreign policy news, and ending dependency on the agencies in foreign news, which was unlikely.

Although I have been concerned in this chapter to point out how little the production process changed as a result of the May, 2004 relaunch, the failure of management to push through a revamp of the editorial structure and the resultant inability of the system to deal with e.g. breaking news indicated that the existing correlation of forces empowered the general news teams within the journalistic field to not change, the logical solution to the impossibility of changing the structural relationship between source material and content.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I have looked at the production process. I have looked at the role of continuity in news production and the manner in which continuity was institutionalized at CCTV-9 through the use of repeat stories and third party source materials. I have analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the production system at CCTV-9, especially

the tightly regimented news making process and the manner in which resources were put to maximum use on the plus side.

The downside of the production system was a re-active rather than pro-active news editing system, which handled scheduled stories very well, but did not handle breaking stories well. Although breaking stories were only a small part of output, CCTV-9's failure on the tsunami story exposed a serious flaw in the news editing system that management said it was concerned to fix. However failure to establish a desking system hampered management's attempts at change.

CCTV-9 had evolved as a translation service for third party material. After its launch as a 24-hour service in September 2000, reliance on third party materials became an entrenched feature of servicing the news making machine. CCTV-1 and *Xinhua* guaranteed politically correct domestic and foreign policy news. My attempts and those of senior management to build a better relationship with Reuters failed. The entrenched news making culture and the momentum that the channel had developed out of its launch as a 24-hour service could not so easily be changed.

## **Chapter 10: Reporters**

### **INTRODUCTION**

If in the previous three chapters a picture of a disciplined (in the double sense of the word) news making system has been evident, then in this chapter I want to show how discipline has its limits. One of the themes that I have threaded throughout this dissertation is an account, following Pan & Lu (2003), of how Certeau's (1984) tactics of the weak play out with respect to the strategies of the strong, from reconfiguring the discourse of the power structure to refusal. A second theme has been that Chinese news makers have historically played a double role as agents and critics of the authorities. Today's journalists inherited this double role from their precursors in the intellectual professions, who laid the foundations for journalism in the PRC in Imperial and Republican China. In this chapter, I use the work of the reporters at CCTV-9 to show how this double role played out in day-to-day work, in particular in the tactics they used to make stories that were professionally and personally satisfying, while meeting the requirements of the regulatory and censorial agencies. Following a broad introduction of the work of the reporters' group, I show, by focusing on a single story, work that was typical of the best done at CCTV-9.

I open the chapter with a general discussion of the work of the reporters' group at CCTV-9. Following this, I look at a single story, HIV/AIDS in the PRC, and how one reporter handled this story. I have chosen the HIV/AIDS story as the focus of this chapter for two reasons. Firstly, channel management and staff acknowledged the story as both professionally accomplished and hard hitting, pushing the reporting envelope at CCTV-9 as far as it would go short of breaching reporting guidelines. Secondly, I was heavily involved in developing the story for broadcast, once it had been shot by the reporter and

cameraman. As a result, from the point of view of understanding how news was made at CCTV-9, this was a good example of the process of hybridization that characterizes much production at the channel, although the extent of my involvement was atypical for ‘foreign experts’ at CCTV-9.

Of all the staff at CCTV-9, the reporters were the group whose work I cared for the most. Although I had the utmost respect for senior management, and many of the other staff from anchors to interns, I felt that the future of CCTV-9 as an international news channel depended far more on developing its reporting than on developing any other single aspect of the channel. Soon after joining CCTV-9 in mid-2003, I was tasked by senior management with training the reporting group. In this I had the full support of the head of the reporters’ group, an excellent journalist, who features in this chapter as the HIV/AIDS reports were his work and those of the cameraman with whom he worked.

In discussing his conceptualization of the journalistic field, Bourdieu (2005a) insists on a focus on the field rather than journalists:

[b]ecause so long as one talks about journalists, one is talking within a logic of personal responsibility: one is looking for people to blame, and on the other hand, one oscillates between the positive image that journalists continue to propagate (against all the evidence), with the theme of journalism as a countervailing force, a critical tool (no democracy without journalism), etc., and the opposing vision which sees journalism as a relay of a structure of oppression, etc. Journalists are set up as responsible, and, because the problem is posed in terms of responsibility, the visible agents become scapegoats, whereas if one talks in terms of a field one substitutes for these visible agents – who, in Plato’s metaphor, are the puppets whose strings have to be found – the structure of the journalistic field and the mechanisms that operate within it. (pp. 41-42)

Although I agree with Bourdieu (2005a) in principle, by factoring in Certeau’s (1984) insistence on the irreducibility of particular acts in everyday life, the practice of journalism can be brought to life, without conflating agency with responsibility. Although the reporters were responsible for their work in the sense that they made the

stories associated with their names, by focusing on the full range of forces that enabled and constrained the making of AIDS Report, the deep imbrication of journalistic agency in the power structure and the negotiation of control with and within that structure is foregrounded. As a result responsibility clearly shifts from the individual to the field.

In the discussion that follows, I make no apology for my partiality. Although I am constrained as an academic to provide an accurate as possible account of the work of the reporters' group, I do not believe I should conceal my enthusiasm for their work. If CCTV-9 is to have a future as an international news channel, more than any other section it will be the work of the reporting group that stamps the channel with the authority it seeks. Only in its reporting of the domestic and foreign policy story can the channel set itself off from its competitors like CNN-I and BBC-WS, which do not have the privileged access to the PRC story that CCTV-9 enjoys. Moreover, in so far as the previous chapter has shown that in its reliance on the international news agencies on the foreign story CCTV-9 largely mirrors the world seen on its competitors, then its news makers only needs to learn how to handle breaking news in order to match the offerings seen on channels like CNN-I and BBC-WS.

This chapter is the third of three that deal with elements of the research question:

- How did news makers at CCTV-9 negotiate control over news making in their day to day work?

The intermediate question and subordinate questions this chapter addressed were as follows:

- What did journalists at CCTV-9 do?
  - Who were the reporters?
  - What motivated their work?

- What tactics did they deploy in negotiating constraints on their work?
- What does one story, the reporting of HIV/AIDS, tell about journalistic agency in the PRC?

#### **THE CCTV-9 REPORTERS' GROUP**



Illustration 10: April 2004 publicity picture of the CCTV-9 Reporters' Group

Although the work of the reporters' group constituted only a small part of the news output of CCTV-9, a situation I discuss in the following chapter, its formal importance to the channel outweighed its contribution measured only in proportion of

stories or minutes of air time, since its work was key to defining the character of the channel as a news channel. In the OSC blueprint for the May 2004 relaunch, management's ambitions for the reporters' group were detailed in the following manner:

We must increase our authoritativeness. We must strengthen the current reporters' team. On every major domestic or foreign story we must have a CCTV-9 reporter file from the scene in order to raise the professionalism and authoritativeness of the report. Whether it's a national leader visiting abroad or a major international story like the Iraq war, or APEC summit etc., we must send our own reporters more often to do on-the-spot stories. CCTV-9's reporters can go out. Whenever there is a major international story, having them on screen and hearing their voices will enormously increase CCTV-9's authoritativeness and internationalization.

要提高权威性，要充实现有的英语采访队伍，每当发生国际国内重大新闻事件时，必须有 CCTV-9 记者作现场报道，以增强报道的专业性和权威性。如中国国家领导人出访或者发生国际大事如伊拉克战争，APEC 峰会等增派英语记者作现场报。英语记者能够走出去，在这些举世关注的大事发生时有他们的身影和声音，将大大提高英语频道的权威性和国际性。(CCTV, 2003c)

However, the volume of the news produced by the reporters' group actually *fell* ('Self Cover' in Figure 13, p. 415) *after* the May 2004 relaunch, perhaps reflecting the ambiguous situation of the group within the channel, now that it had successfully resisted the tenor of the OSC blueprint to function less as a general purpose broadcaster and more as a news channel. Given that the work of the reporters' group did not concern most staff, the latter remained indifferent to the group's meaning for the channel, despite the group's alleged importance to 'branding' CCTV International as a news channel. That the *reporters' group at a news channel* [author's emphasis] had to struggle to stay noticed was indicative of the overall tension within the channel over access to and allocation of resources, both financial and human. Although senior management backed the group, the group itself was only a very small part of the channel, and suffered for not having strong support within the channel, outside of senior management.



During my time at CCTV-9, the reporters' group was an independent unit within CCTV-9's editorial structure. It supplied news to the general news (CCTV News, including News Updates post re-launch, and World Wide Watch). The specialist news shows were permitted to use the work of the reporters' group if their producers wanted to. Of the specialist news groups, only Biz China was represented within the reporters' group, with two reporters attached to the group. However, they were formally part of Biz China, not members of the reporters' group. The other specialist news shows were able to send writers out to report stories, but they were not recognized within CCTV-9 as reporters, although they functioned as such. To be a member of the reporters' group was a privilege actively sought by many of the writers, but awarded by the Controller with the consent of the head of the reporters' group.

The group was set up in 1997 and headed at the time by a senior staffer at the channel, who would go on to become head of current affairs and host of 'Dialogue,' a show similar in format and intention to programs like CNN's *Larry King Live* and the BBC's *Hardtalk*.<sup>141</sup> The other reporters to launch the group would later move into management or serve abroad as CCTV correspondents. From the roll call of those associated with the reporters' group since its inception, the group was clearly central to the channel's news making system. A further indication of the formal status of the reporters' group within the overall structure of the channel was evident in its reporting line within the editorial system, as the head of the group reported directly to the Controller, rather than to the Deputy Controller (Head of News) (see Figure 4, p. 258).

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<sup>141</sup> Like other CCTV-9 programming, *Dialogue* functioned as part of the 'wai xuan' system, restricting the moderator's ability to address contentious topics, except in a manner that did not bluntly question the Party and government's position on the issue. However, this did not prevent the host from pushing the envelope whenever possible, although I personally found elements of his style as irritating as I find Larry King's failure to ask tough questions boring. That having been said, the pro-China bias on *Dialogue* was at least understandable in the context of CCTV-9's 'wai xuan' function, in contrast to the repugnant xenophobia of shows like *The O'Reilly Factor* on Fox in the United States.

At the time of the May 2004 relaunch, the head of the reporters' group was an experienced correspondent, who had joined the channel in 1995 from Beijing Radio. I worked closely with the group at the request of management. My role consisted of attending weekly playback sessions where I would join the reporters in an examination of their previous week's work,<sup>142</sup> ghost writing and copy editing their stories as needed, and helping reporters develop their stories, whether through suggesting topics, or how to handle them, from pre-production through post-production. At the time of the relaunch in May 2004, the team had nine members, four women and five men. Bracketing the more experienced directors and zhubians, the reporters represented most of the cream of CCTV-9's talent from within the general news department and worked extremely hard to deliver professional, hard hitting stories about the PRC.<sup>143</sup>

### **Committed journalists**

The lot of the reporter in the PRC is not an easy one. I have already noted (see p. 132) the dangers associated with working as a journalist in the PRC. At CCTV-9, the 'wai xuan' function of the channel restricted some of the types of coverage that the reporters were permitted to do. For example, SARFT and CCTV management forbade CCTV-9 from doing the kind of investigative reporting associated with, for example, *Jiaodian Fangtan* and *Economic News Half Hour* (see p. 128). But given their restricted remit, the CCTV-9 reporters were still concerned to be as hard hitting as possible. In this, they had the full support of channel management, although many topics had to be negotiated and the Controller would overrule the head of the reporters' group if the topic

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<sup>142</sup> A former anchor from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), also attended the reporters' playback sessions.

<sup>143</sup> I say "most of the cream" because during my time at CCTV-9, at least one general news writer and one director who had the talent to be a reporter told me they would not have accepted the offer even had it been made. Their attitude was the exception in the newsroom.

or the group's handling of it was felt to be too contentious. Nevertheless, as I shall show below with the HIV/AIDS story, senior management were concerned to give the group as much support as possible in their bid to make CCTV-9 as strong a news channel as possible, including on the domestic story.

Typical of the work of the reporters' group was a series of stories the group devised to mark the May 2004 relaunch. The series was called 'China's Challenges.' Twenty stories were planned of which sixteen were produced:<sup>144</sup>

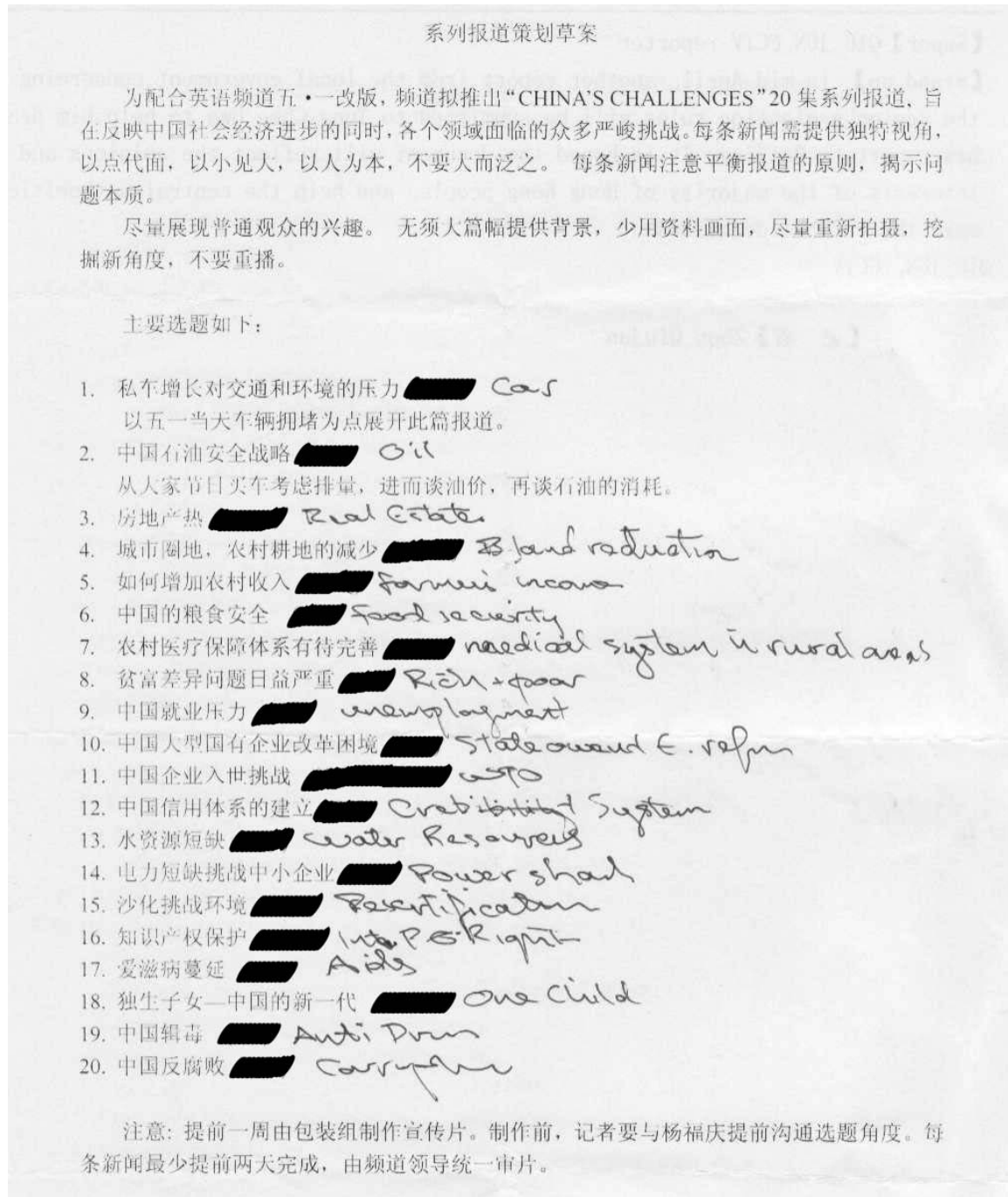
1. China launches war on drugs
2. China to overhaul rural health system
3. Unemployment dogs China
4. Deserts drive farmers from land
5. Gap widens between the poor and rich
6. SOEs chained by social functions
7. Urbanization threatens arable land
8. Beijing handles water crisis
9. Dancing with foreign wolves<sup>145</sup>
10. Only-child generation grows up
11. Farmers fight rural poverty
12. Energy shortages plague enterprises
13. China highlights work safety
14. Beijing cars
15. IPR protection: a long-term test for China
16. China struggles to reform banks

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<sup>144</sup> Source: CCTV-9 working document and <http://www.cctv.com/english/special/C12295/2/index.shtml>.

<sup>145</sup> On the threat Chinese companies face from foreign competition.

Illustration 11: Author's annotated working list of stories for China's Challenges  
(source: CCTV-9)



The reporters created the working list of planned stories (Illustration 11) without input from management. It showed what they considered some of the most pressing issues facing the PRC government, business and society. The series was praised by management and, according to management, by the audience:

Comrade Li Changchun has outlined the “Three Stay in Touches” for external publicity [‘wai xuan’]: stay in touch with China’s reality; stay in touch with the foreign audiences’ demand for information; stay in touch with the habits of the foreign audiences. These are the guidelines for doing external publicity well. With respect to the foreign audiences’ expectation that “bad news is good news,” we should not attempt to avoid problems with the market economy or this or that problem. CCTV-9 must do more in the way of explanatory reports. The series ‘China’s Challenges’ that aired after the relaunch was a relatively good example of balanced reporting. It addressed the successes and the shortcomings. Foreign audiences rated it highly. (Jiang & Liu, 2004, p. 55)

As a measure of the quality of the series, at the annual CNN World Report Awards for the year 2004, ‘Beijing cars’ won Best Story in the economics category.<sup>146</sup> Although CCTV-9 had been a long-time contributor to CNN World Report, the channel had never won in any category at the awards before this story was honored. The HIV/AIDS stories I discuss below had originally been planned as a single story for ‘China’s Challenges.’ But the reporter ended up doing a whole series of stories. One of them, ‘The Price of Blood’, was also entered into the 2004 CNN awards and was one of three stories nominated for the top prize in the ‘Best Ongoing Issue’ category.

But it was not in the public recognition the group received for its work that its strength lay, since it received little public recognition. Because the group was only responsible for a small proportion of the total content of the channel (see the following chapter), its work often went un-noticed by group members’ colleagues, whose concerns

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<sup>146</sup> CNN World Report was launched in 1987. The program airs stories submitted from broadcasters around the world. The reports are not re-edited by CNN, but aired as they are received from the contributing channel (see <http://www.cnn.com/CNN-I/Programs/world.report/>).

were largely unrelated to the work of the reporters' group. The real strength of the reporters' group lay in their commitment to journalism as a socially responsible profession that demanded a high degree of professionalism and personal commitment to the story if it was to be done, despite the institutional forces such as the Central Publicity Department arrayed against journalism that would question the Party/State line in any way in the PRC.

This attitude was evident in the manner in which the group approached their work. Fiercely independent within CCTV-9, they would discuss among themselves appropriate topics and themes for coverage and decide on an approach, before the Senior Producer would present it to senior management. The 'China's Challenges' series was a typical result of this process. The reporters as a group were seeking to make an impact and a statement about what kind of channel they wanted CCTV-9 to be with the May 2004 relaunch and with 'China's Challenges' produced a set of stories that advanced that statement.

Individually, the experience and skill levels of the journalists who made up the reporters' group were mixed. Management wanted to expand the group, but writers who were promoted to reporter would be called on to develop superior writing and video editing skills to those they had already acquired, since now they would be producing the material themselves rather than fashioning stories from third party materials. In addition, CCTV-9 reporters worked as their own producers. So for writers newly promoted, becoming a reporter meant learning also how to produce, which meant learning how to develop stories and organize their production, from planning stories to arranging interviews and booking flights and hotel rooms for themselves and the cameraman.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> At the time of writing, CCTV-9 did not have any women working as camera operators. Until recent years this had been the case worldwide with mainstream media. However, the 'macho' associated with the masculinist concept of camerawork as 'heavy work' and a 'man's' job lingers at CCTV. One of my first

The group took pride in seeing any one of their newer members make the transition from writer to reporter:

[Head of the reporters' group] [A] and [B] are two successful examples, and even today [X - Deputy Controller (Head of News)] do not believe that [A] and [B] are good reporters and will become good reporters. [X] just told me yesterday, [A] and [B] will never be potentially good reporters. And I say why, they are talented, do you see their reports recently... When I ask [X] can I take this one or that [writer to try out as a reporter], [X] says, actually no-one is qualified for your group. He says, who is qualified?

In this case, the two writers concerned both developed as excellent reporters. Moreover, both of them developed exactly the kind of feistiness that makes a good reporter in the face of management opposition to stories which might impact negatively on the government and/or the channel.

[A], for example, on November, 28, 2004 was dispatched to Shaanxi Province when news broke of a fire at the Chenjiashan coal mine that would eventually claim 166 lives (BBC/Xinhua, 2004). He filed a story that night, for which I copy edited the piece to camera. However, I learned later that management had refused to air the story, saying it was "too graphic." However, according to staff on duty the real problem was that [A] had implicated mine management in the disaster and local government too, since it was a state-owned enterprise.

Rescued miners told the reporter that they had been forced back underground, despite the fact (later reported in e.g. China Daily, 2004a) that a fire had been already burning in the mine for almost a week: [Miner quoted in A's script] "Fires have been burning up in the mine since the 23rd. The head of mine knew that, but still let the work continue." The PRC's print media would run this angle to the story on the following day

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suggestions when I started working with the reporters' group was that the cameramen use tripods for all their shooting whenever possible. The cameramen at the meeting were derisive, arguing (as I had heard and seen at NBC and Reuters in the past) that they could hold a shot steady without the aid of a tripod. Once they started shooting with tripods, the difference was immediately evident.

(China Daily, 2004a; Lim, 2004), but CCTV-9 management refused to lift the ban on [A]’s story, which closed with the observation: “[Miner] says there were almost 3000 workers at the mine. Every one of them knew the fire would cause a gas explosion. All they got was a note telling them to continue working and to get rid of the danger themselves.” In the piece to camera that followed, the reporter concluded: “For some people, profit has more value than human life.”

The following morning (Monday), I was again on duty when [A] rang in with an update on the original story. He was angry with CCTV-9 management for what staff in the newsroom were calling a cover-up. I helped him with the piece to camera for the second story. However, again, the zhubian refused to air the story. This time, I went to senior management and begged them to run the story, arguing that *China Youth Daily*<sup>148</sup> had already run the angle that management had ordered the miners to continue working, despite the fire underground. Senior management refused to budge.

Frustrated I went home. That evening, I was watching the BBC-WS report on the accident, and the correspondent, almost quoting [A], finished with the words: “Profit is taking precedence over human life.” I wrote a note in my diary that the reporter had beaten the BBC by 24 hours on the story, had got it right, and that management had refused to air his report.

[A] stayed at the mine, and his later stories were aired. The 1900 bulletin of World Wide Watch on November 29 had his account of the efforts of central, provincial and local government to deal with the disaster. Lost was the focus on the mine management and their apparent culpability in the disaster.

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<sup>148</sup> Source: Diary note. Reuters had run a wire story, citing China Youth Daily.



Although reporters, zhubians and management usually had enough respect for one another to negotiate most contentious issues, the case of the Chenjiashan mine disaster showed clearly the heavy hand of management, and the limits to which they were willing to accept criticism of the government. To my mind, [A] showed a great deal of courage and integrity in refusing to reshape his original story, doing instead a new story that was little more than a cynical exercise in pandering to the demands of management for a positive spin even on a tragedy. As a junior reporter, [A] was still learning the tactics of evading censorship.

Only a month earlier, a more experienced reporter had been dispatched to Henan Province, where an explosion at a coal mine would kill 148 workers (Xinhua, 2004c). The reporter sent a powerful story focusing on the families of those who had lost family members in the blast. Again, the zhubian on duty refused to air the story, with the backing of management. However, in this case the reporter agreed to rework the story to focus on the government response and rescue efforts. It aired without losing some of the original focus on the victims' families. Again the reporter was angry that management had forced him to tone down and change the focus of his original story. However, he knew that by refocusing on the government's response to the disaster, he would be able to get most of what he wanted to air.

Even so, the reporter faced censure when he returned to Beijing, and was publicly chastised for his original story with its focus on the families of victims of the tragedy. Dressing him down at the weekly channel-wide Tuesday meeting, senior management said: "You are a good reporter, but you have a responsibility." When I spoke to the reporter, he reiterated that he felt the story of the families should have been told.

I later discussed the story and aftermath with senior management:

[Jirik] We have a breaking news story, the Zhengzhou mine disaster, [X] was sent, the story comes back. [The zhubian] censored it.

[senior management] Uh-huh.

[Jirik] And then my understanding was that you were also critical of his work at a Tuesday meeting.

[senior management] It's not a balanced report. That's the only problem. It's a purely one-sided story. If it is, we promote the balanced report, report in journalism.

[Jirik] What do you mean by balanced?

[senior management] The balanced when we have one coin with two sides. If you only report on one side, then it is imbalanced. You have to report on two sides of the same coin. That's my idea of the balanced reporting system, journalism.

[Jirik] Critics of the news system here in China would say, one side of that coin is that you simply must always repeat what the government says.

[senior management] That's why we have to be more internationalized, like our AIDS Report, like our Energy Crunch, like the China's Challenges series, done by our reporting team. That's the balanced reporting.

Management's definition of balanced reporting reflected the OSC blueprint for the May 2004 relaunch, which as already noted (p. 241) insisted that news "reflect the government's position and point of view," while simultaneously being "objective, impartial and balanced" (CCTV, 2003c). Although the spirit of the OSC blueprint is laudable for attempting to move beyond the one-sided focus on the negative that characterizes much news, mine disasters that kill 148 and then 166 workers have no upside.

In insisting that such stories be framed in terms of government rescue and response efforts, management saw themselves as protecting the channel from the censors and regulatory authorities, even if the reporters saw them as agents of the censors and regulatory authorities. Both sides have a point. Keeping in mind the hard won inroads

media have made into reporting such stories in recent years (see p. 263), the framing of mine disasters as stories about government rescue and response efforts is an excellent example of the tactics media have developed for evading censure (see below, p. 372).

Whenever the frequent mine accidents happen in the PRC (see below, p. 374, footnote 152), media usually report that the provincial governor and a plethora of subordinates have “rushed” to the disaster scene to coordinate rescue work. Only by framing the story in this way, can the reporter get the news out, without the CPD issuing a ban. Moreover, a story framed in this way still implies government culpability for not regulating the mining industry and protecting workers. In short, simply by reporting on industrial accidents reporters paint the government in a bad light, because so many of the accidents either happen in state-owned enterprises (SOEs), or in poorly regulated industries that have broken away from the SOE system, or in unregulated and illegal industries, including within the mining sector.<sup>149</sup>

Evident also in reporting disaster stories is an element of what Pan & Lu (2003) refer to as the manner in which reporters and media managers struggle for control of news discourse through different interpretations of terms such as ‘professionalism’. Whereas management tended to interpret ‘professionalism’ as the demand for news that reflected government opinion in the final analysis, reporters increasingly saw government opinion as only one necessary but not sufficient condition for an objective, impartial and balanced story. As they learned the routines of news making, the CCTV-9 reporters became adept at evading censorship, but they also saw themselves as the vanguard of experimentation with form in news reporting within the channel. And, as the case with

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<sup>149</sup> According to PRC state media, 6,027 workers died in mining accidents in 2004 (although AFP notes that independent estimates put the number at closer to 20,000) (AFP, 2005). Concern at the accident rate in the mining industry prompted the Central Government in 2005 to close 2,411 illegal and/or unsafe mines (out of some 34,000 total, calculated from the figures in the *Xinhua* story) (US State Dept., 2006; *Xinhua*, 2005b).

[A] showed, at times they were unafraid to refuse to change a story even if it meant it would not air, when they personally felt they were being asked to tone down or cover up the core element.

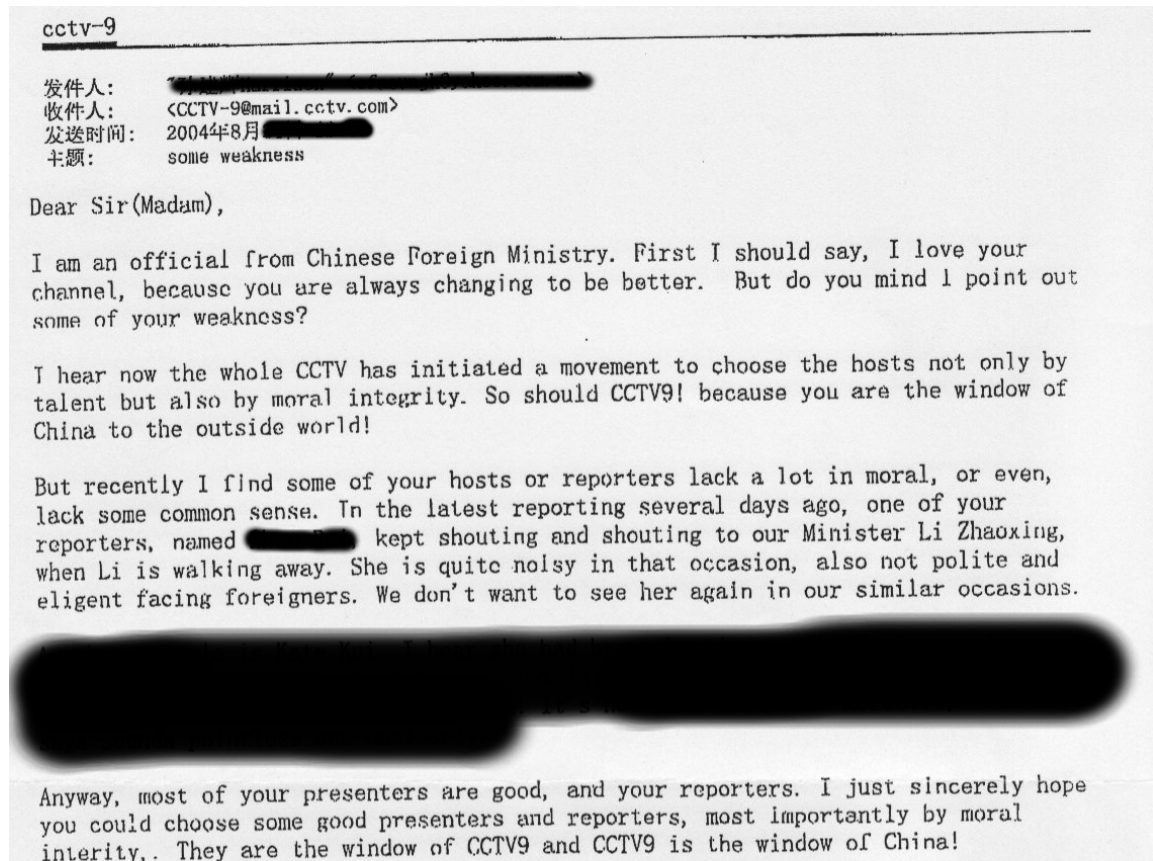
Occasionally their combativeness on a story would backfire. In August 2004, a writer trying out for the team was banned from further reporting after she shouted a question out to Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing apparently at an inappropriate moment. An irate subordinate of Li fired off an email (Illustration 12) to CCTV, which ended the young woman's career as a reporter.

I was suspicious that the foreign ministry would send an email in English to a generic channel address, rather than go through official channels. I also felt senior management were being heavy-handed, especially as she was only a junior and still learning. Thinking to ask for a reprieve for her, I asked senior management whether the email was genuine, as the woman in question had her critics (including me) within the channel, and I thought she might have become the target of a smear campaign. Senior management said the authenticity of the email was not in question and that the matter was closed.

To my mind, a far more serious but not career-ending breach of reporting discipline occurred in February 2004 on the opening day of talks the PRC had arranged between the PRC, DPRK, South Korea, United States, Russia and Japan to try to end the DPRK's nuclear program. A photo opportunity had been put on in the negotiating room ahead of the PRC's formal opening of the talks. However, when the press was ushered out, a CCTV-9 reporter, who had sat down at an empty seat next to the DPRK delegation at the negotiating table, on impulse decided to stay, thinking he could use his cell phone to relay the opening statements to the newsroom. When I later asked him why he had

done this, he said it was the dream of every reporter to get the scoop: “You can’t imagine the feeling I had, being the only one there.”

Illustration 12: Foreign Ministry fax criticizing CCTV-9 reporter



With the instant decision made, the talks opened with China’s delegate Wang Yi delivering China’s opening position. That lasted twenty minutes. Then just as the DPRK delegate was about to speak, a PRC foreign ministry official approached and asked the CCTV-9 reporter what was he doing there. The reporter was hustled out and briefly detained by security at the venue before CCTV representatives secured his release. According to CCTV-9 staff, CCTV’s president, accompanied by the head of the Overseas Service Center and the CCTV-9 controller, was forced to go to the foreign ministry and

apologize for the alleged breach of protocol. But the reporter, who was a rising star, was given little more than a slap on the wrist, banned only from covering the foreign ministry.

At CCTV, colleagues debated the reporter's actions. As one zhubian noted: "Everyone knows about it. [X] is very famous". [Jirik] "Is this person considered a hero or a villain, inside CCTV?" [zhubian] "I think it's kind of a mixed feeling." Some lauded his daring. But the consensus was that he had gone too far by staying in the room, and hence potentially jeopardizing all press access to the talks.

I recorded my own reaction in my diary:

He does not seem to understand that reporters play by unwritten rules, and that to stay in the room breached an unwritten rule whereby the press, government relationship is managed. On the other hand, had he stayed, he may well have had a scoop. But was it a scoop worth the risk – not only to his own career and to CCTV-9 and CCTV, but also to the talks themselves. Given how touchy the DPRK is, had he in any [way] managed to get the report out and on air, or in print, it is unknown what the DPRK reaction might have been. But... it was [also] an excellent example of the new openness and boldness of the journalists in China. (Diary entry February 29, 2004)

As a former television news producer I quietly applauded, since my own attitude was that you did whatever necessary, short of jeopardizing the safety of one's colleagues, including that of the opposition, to not only get the story, but also beat the opposition. However, in the PRC, the opposition is not only the other press, but also the censors and regulatory authorities. Even as media compete amongst themselves, when facing the CPD and SARFT they present a loosely united front, and have developed a sophisticated arsenal of tactics with which to evade, confront or co-opt the authorities.<sup>150</sup> The reporter's gambit was seen as a breach of the trust implicit in the united front, and was therefore seen as an unacceptable ploy in the bid to win on the story.

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<sup>150</sup> I do not want to make too much of this sense of camaraderie, as my experience with NBC and Reuters showed that in difficult situations media workers worldwide tend to look out for one another, regardless of their professional and corporate affiliations.

Regardless of the defensibility or otherwise of his actions, it was the best example I saw in my time at CCTV-9 of the lengths to which reporters were willing to go to get the story, and at the same time push the reporting envelope. That the reporter got off with little more than a warning also indicates just how much leeway reporters were beginning to have within the news making system. At the same time, his treatment compared to that meted out to the junior reporter suggested that different standards were at work at CCTV-9 depending on the person involved when staff actions were put under the microscope.

#### **NEGOTIATING CENSORSHIP**

The arts of negotiating or evading censorship have become a mark of distinction within the reporting profession in the PRC. I have already noted (p. 128) Pan & Lu's (2003) discussion of the tactics that producers at CCTV's investigative shows *Jiaodian Fangtan* ('Focus') and *Xinwen Diaocha* ('News Probe') use to evade censorship. Tong Jingrong (2007) has also addressed this issue, discussing five tactics journalists use:

1. Strategic choice of themes
2. Political comment disguised as constructive criticism
3. Writing between the lines, by allowing facts and objectivity to imply an unstated narrative
4. Using quotations from sources acceptable to officials
5. Obtaining interviews through journalists' self-misrepresentation

CCTV-9 reporters used the first four tactics, but not the fifth,<sup>151</sup> which might have been considered unprofessional. With respect to the issue of misrepresentation, in defense of Tong's (2007) informants, they were doing a type of investigative reporting that

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<sup>151</sup> Although that would not have been the case had the reporter managed to get out the six-party talks story, in effect masquerading as a member of the DPRK delegation.

CCTV-9 did not tackle. However misrepresentation of oneself as not a journalist is a tactic that I believe journalists should avoid. Perhaps I am splitting hairs, quietly applauding the CCTV-9 reporter's actions on the DPRK talks, while agreeing that reporters should not misrepresent themselves. However, the failure in the case of the DPRK story was that of the PRC foreign ministry in not recognizing a reporter was still in the room. Perhaps tactical misrepresentation under certain circumstances is acceptable while misrepresentation as a strategy is unethical, although investigative reporting often deploys it. In the PRC, in Tong's examples (2007), tactical misrepresentation points to the compromises reporters are forced to make to do their work in an extremely hostile and unforgiving environment.

In terms of Tong's (2007) other tactics, at CCTV-9 the focus on government response and rescue work at mine accidents was a good example of strategic choice of themes. Whereas [A] refused to change his story, the reporter sent to Henan Province was willing to shift his focus far enough away from the victims and their families to the government to get the story on air. I would argue that the commitment to socially responsible reporting in the PRC was typical of the second tactic, since reporters were often as concerned to make a point, which might mean taking a side on an issue, as they were with objectivity and balance, a position evident from interviews:

[Jirik] So you see the role of the reporter, it's not just to report, but to actually change?

[Reporter] Yeah... I believe changing something, especially some you know, changing a bad thing, bad decision, that's kind of a reporter's responsibility. Yes, we are reporting the truth and the facts. But the way is sometimes is trying to educate people, and trying to promote the awareness, and trying to tell the government you know some of the decisions might be wrong. Or they have to reconsider. I don't know how powerful it is. But at least that's what I think.



That having been said, facts and objectivity can often imply an unstated narrative (Tong's tactic #3). The case of the mine disasters again was a good example, since the frequency of mine accidents suggests serious safety issues within the PRC's mining industry that have nothing to do with the inherent dangers of mining in general.<sup>152</sup> Reporters were aware that letting the facts speak for themselves would sometimes make the point, without the reporter showing their position on a story:

[Jirik] The Chinese media are always being slammed in the West for not covering human rights, political issues, Hong Kong, Taiwan. Is this a fair criticism at all?

[Reporter] I think by human rights issues we have a lot of stories, and we personalize it, and they will just narrow down, and it's, I think it's a story about human rights. But the difference is we just don't stand out and say the Chinese government has a poor human rights record. It's just the way of expressing differently, but how can you avoid human rights in every story, because it's always about people.

The fourth tactic is hardly unique to the PRC. As one school of media researchers in the United States (Glasser, 1992; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; McChesney, 1999; Schiller, 1992 et al.) consistently shows, privileging official voices as sources of information is characteristic of mainstream media and the journalistic profession.

Tong (2007) does not cite Pan & Lu's (2003) work on Certeau (Certeau, 1984). But her insights fit the patterns that Pan & Lu have identified. At CCTV-9, apart from those tactics already discussed, one of the chief ways of avoiding censorship was to beat the censors to the story. Typically it took the CPD or SARFT several hours to several days to issue a directive banning reporting on an event. Within this window, reporters had time to get a story to air if they were fast enough:

If the media they think bad news they touch the government interest, the government may try to stop.... you know if some big events, big kind of disaster

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<sup>152</sup> *Xinhua* noted in 2004 that "the death rate for every 100 tonnes of coal produced in China was 100 times that of the United States" (Lim, 2004).

happen, that kind of disaster not natural disaster, maybe something because government authority they didn't work very well, that kind of thing, they may try to make that kind of thing coverage low tune [key]. So, but, the media has for several, after several cases and experience, they realize the time difference is very important... We make use of time difference, because not like American government, they [US govt.] work very efficient, they feed news, they feed all information to the media very quick. But in China, not so quick, so between government action and the time between the events happen, there are about two or three days, so the media at that time, not any deadline, so they can do anything they want to do.

CCTV-9's reporters would deploy this tactic whenever possible. I have already discussed the directive that shut down reporting of a kindergarten attack (see p. 282) in Beijing in early August 2004, when a gatekeeper at the school slashed fifteen children, killing one. However, before the directive was issued, CCTV-9 had dispatched to the scene a reporter, who filed a story and follow up before the ban went into effect. I was so impressed by the speed with which the channel had moved, given the general failure to cover breaking stories in a timely fashion (see p. 334), that I sent the reporters' group and senior management an email the following day, congratulating them on the coverage:

Great work by [X] on the kindergarten attack. Excellent first piece with all the available elements. Excellent update, adding just a little bit extra to flesh out the story. In addition to his skill, [X]'s attitude to his work is a real credit to his professionalism. (source: email sent August 5, 2004)

A second example of beating the censor was the CCTV-9 report on a protest by some fifty Chinese outside the Japanese embassy in Beijing in late March, 2004, after Japanese authorities earlier arrested seven Chinese activists who had landed on the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku<sup>153</sup> Islands in the East China Sea. The protest was late at night, and senior management at CCTV were extremely reluctant to allow coverage, given the government's prevarication on the issue of anti-Japanese protests.<sup>154</sup> However, after four

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<sup>153</sup> The disputed region is called the Diaoyu islands in the PRC and Senkaku islands in Japan.

<sup>154</sup> The PRC government at times appears to turn a blind eye to if not actively foment anti-Japanese sentiment. At other times it attempts to curtail the protests. Experts see reason for concern. At the time of

appeals to senior management for permission to do the story, the reporters' group was given the green light to cover the protest, and, as it turned out, were the only PRC media to video the demonstration.<sup>155</sup> The report aired in the early hours of the morning and ran several times before a directive preventing further coverage was issued. A reporter later commented:

[T]he government reaction is usually late. So, if we are quick enough, like the kindergarten story, like the protest at the Japanese embassy, we still can be aired and follow our principle [of professionalism]. So we are just like a turtle and rabbit's competition: who is faster and who can win. Because, before the government's demand comes, we have already aired. And nobody will blame me.

### **Hitting line balls**

The various tactics of evading censorship in the PRC can be summarized by the term 'hitting line balls' (打擦边球 *da ca bian qiu*). The reference is to table tennis and the ability of a player to hit the edge of the table, a legitimate shot, but one which is almost impossible to return (Lee, 2004; Xiao, 2007). At CCTV-9, staff from senior management down were always seeking an edge and calculating exactly where the limit was on any particular story. The best table tennis player at CCTV-9 was reputed to be the Controller. But other managers, many of the *zhubians* and directors, the reporters' group and some of the writers worked relentlessly on honing this skill, since a miscalculation on a story could have serious consequences, embarrassing the channel, even ending a career.

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the Japanese embassy protest, Alan Dupont, a senior fellow at the Lowy Institute for International Policy in Sydney, noted about the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute: "I don't think it is the intention of either side to let these things get out of hand, but it does illustrate the potential for conflicts to arise and, if they are not carefully handled, to go wrong" (SCMP, 2004c).

<sup>155</sup> At the Monday reporters' group meeting following the embassy protest, I later noted in my diary that "They were pleased by Friday night's protest story by [X] outside the Japanese Embassy. I said it was fine. But why did we only do this protest and ignore other protests in China, such as the (alleged) evictions to make way for Olympic housing, and the unemployed in other cities. [The head of the reporters' group] said the Diaoyu Islands protest was an international story. I suggested it bordered on propaganda."

The art of hitting line balls is not new. Nor is it connected to any particularly new development in PRC media, especially their need to compete in a commercial environment following the beginning of a shift to a commercial revenue model in 1992 and later developments, such as the introduction and expansion of the internet. As Xiao (2007) notes, the term was already in use in the mid-1980s, the “heyday of political reform,” when “Qin Benli (钦本力), chief editor of the avant-garde Shanghai newspaper World Economic Herald (shut down in March 1990), used this metaphor to describe the art of Chinese journalists gaming with the censors” (Xiao, 2007).

Given the roots of modern Chinese journalism in the yellow press of the late imperial and early Republican periods, when Confucian-minded reformers and critics of the governments of the day grappled with the problem of both representing and speaking truth to power, which was later codified by Deng Xiaoping in the demand for to seek truth from facts yet still subjected media to Party diktat, small wonder that reporters in the PRC today are such fine table tennis players, given their ambiguous position as both servants and critics of political authority.

However, the art of hitting line balls is not a uniquely Chinese phenomenon. On the contrary, I would suggest that it is characteristic of reporting work in any context where the aims of reporters and media owners and regulators are at odds. I have referred (p. 132) to He Zhou’s (2000c, p. 600) discussion of “ideological dissonance” as a psychological hazard of the reporting profession in the PRC and my own sense that “ideological consonance” is the corollary, which explains why so many journalists in commercialized and public service media systems in the West are so comfortable with their role as mouthpieces of power (Jirik, 2004). In short, the art of hitting line balls is characteristic of socially responsible reporting, where ideological dissonance forces journalists to confront the contradictions of their position in a manner which remains

quite opaque to those who work in media systems where journalists have internalized the ideological norms and institutional rules that shape their work.

Allowing for the universal character of hitting line balls as a function of the degree of constraint censorial, regulatory and institutional agencies such as ownership put on reporting, the case of the PRC is exemplary, given the conjuncture of political, economic and institutional forces enabling and constraining journalism. At CCTV-9, an excellent example of a line ball during the period of observation was a series on HIV/AIDS in Henan Province. The series was aired in the final week of May 2004 and first week of June. I was closely involved in ghost-writing and post-production of the stories, which as they developed proved to be less than a line ball and more of a whole match played on the edge of the permissible.

#### **REPORTING HIV/AIDS**

The issue of HIV/AIDS in the PRC has been a difficult story for media. PRC experts believe HIV entered the country in the late 1980s from the drug production region known as the ‘Golden Triangle’ through drug use in Yunnan Province, which borders Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar (Pang, 2007). But for years, the government denied the problem. The virus and disease were able to spread largely unchecked and gained a foothold in Henan Province in the 1990s primarily due to illegal and unregulated plasma buying schemes that targeted poor farmers and tainted transfusions in hospitals (Sanderson, 2007). Henan was not only at the center of the illegal plasma business, the province is also a major source of migrant labor. Once the disease was established in Henan, it quickly spread beyond the province, as HIV positive villagers went in search of work around the country (Haski, 2005a).<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> The role of migrant labor from Henan in spreading HIV was revealed to me in interviews.

Pierre Haski (2005b) has written extensively on the subject:

Henan, a poor, rural and densely populated region of 100 million, has been hardest hit by the virus - the result of an infamous blood-trade scandal in the early 1990s. Authorities encouraged Henan's poor peasants to sell their blood to collecting stations for industrial use. Tragically, no precautions were taken, and tens of thousands - probably hundreds of thousands - of these peasants, who had never heard of AIDS, were infected with the deadly virus. (Haski, 2005a)

The government moved to shut down the illegal side of the business in the mid-1990s and regulate plasma collection. But in the villages of Henan an epidemic of HIV infections was already underway. Haski (2005b) points to the then governor of the province, Li Changchun, as culpable in what was known as the "blood farming" business. In 1990, Li Changchun had been sent to Henan as Deputy CPC Secretary and Vice-Governor. In 1991, he was promoted to Governor and in 1992 made CPC Secretary, effectively putting him in charge of the province (China Vitae, 2007). In short, the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Henan developed under his watch. However, he was never held accountable (McDonald, 2005). Li continued his rise through the ranks of the Party and in 1997 was appointed to the Politburo, where he was put in charge of publicity (China Vitae, 2007). In that role one of his initiatives resulted in the May 2004 relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International.

Under his watch as publicity czar, critics note that a sophisticated system of stage managing media access to the HIV/AIDS villages in Henan has been developed (McDonald, 2005). One village, Wenlou, has been developed as a Potemkin village for the press and visiting dignitaries, while other affected villages are off limits. According to Haski, the stage-managed meetings between visitors, HIV patients and doctors in Wenlou are "all to protect one man," Li Changchun (McDonald, 2005). In order to do any kind of credible reporting on HIV/AIDS in Henan, a journalist has to by-pass the system of control designed to keep the story off air. In addition, any reporter or correspondent who

does an HIV/AIDS story out of Henan does so knowing that a Politburo member with the attendant power associated with the position was responsible for the province when HIV was spreading unchecked. Nevertheless, that has not stopped reporters from doing the story, which, in its effects, points to a scandal and cover up far worse than the government's attempt to cover up the SARS epidemic in 2003 (see. p. 271).

### **CCTV-9's HIV/AIDS SERIES**

The impetus for the HIV/AIDS series on CCTV-9 was personal. In previous years, beginning in 1997, the reporter had typically done a story for the CCTV English News and its successor, CCTV-9, on World AIDS Day, when the PRC showcases its fight against the disease:

[F]or years, I've been focusing on this topic. And I think this is the exact topic we should follow. I decided. I make that decision. And when we want to do a series called China Challenges, one of the challenges is AIDS the Chinese government face. So I decided to do it myself. But instead of doing one general picture stories, of what is the statistics in China, and what is the government attitude towards it, I want to do some in-depth to see what is the real situation and problem of AIDS in China. So I decided to go to one of the worst hit areas, and one of the areas that has been hidden for years, that's Henan. But when I arrived there, I found that there are so many stories to be covered. There is never ending task... I only stayed there for four days, but it turned out to be seven pieces after I came back. I talked to you and some other persons. So that is how the AIDS series became.

[Jirik] How long have you been thinking about doing this story before you did it?

[reporter] I've been thinking of going to the AIDS stricken village in Henan where the blood farming was extremely, you know, intense for a long time... I was the first the first person in CCTV English service to tackle that problem. And for every year... [the] government, starting in 1998, they started to arrange a program, and I was the person to cover, but the more I cover, the more I found problems exists. And the more I interview, the more problems in depth, the hidden problems appear.

The reporter and cameraman spent a week in the region. In Henan, they visited the villages of Wenlou, Shuangmiao and Donghu and the provincial capital, Zhengzhou.

They also visited Lixiangtan Village in neighboring Shangdong Province for an element of one of the stories. Of the three HIV/AIDS stricken villages (Wenlou, Shuangmiao and Donghu), only Wenlou is readily accessible to visitors, if they use official channels to arrange their visit. However, in order to get a story untainted by government control, the reporting team did not alert local authorities of their intentions, relying instead on CCTV's status as central (government) media to smooth the way:

[Jirik] Did the local government know you went to Henan?

[reporter] No, I didn't inform them,

[Jirik] So when you were actually there, did you have problems with local government?

[reporter] They didn't know it. And they don't have any rights to control me, because I'm on a higher level. So in one part, I have the great advantage to change the situation and make a difference, using my own special status.

[Jirik] When you say you're on a higher level, is that because CCTV is...

[reporter] Yeah, CCTV have a supreme level in China.

Even so, they had problems, in particular in Donghu, where a group of village leaders attempted them to prevent them from leaving and threatened to confiscate or destroy their tapes. The reporter later recounted that it was largely the bravery of their driver and the villagers themselves, who wanted media to expose the situation, that resulted in their safe passage.

They began their journey in Zhengzhou where they interviewed prominent HIV/AIDS activist and government critic, Gao Yaojie. Dr. Gao put them in contact with the network of AIDS activists in the affected villages. On day two they went to Wenlou and Donghu, where they interviewed HIV positive farmers and their families. On day three a villager smuggled them into Shuangmiao where they interviewed another AIDS



activist, who is also a doctor. That afternoon they returned to the provincial capital, Zhengzhou, where they interviewed local officials and arranged to visit an orphanage set up for children whose parents had died from AIDS. On Day four they visited the orphanage and then returned to Wenlou, this time with local officials, to get their side of the story. That evening, still fearing their tapes would be confiscated or destroyed, they boarded a train to neighboring Shandong Province, where they visited Lixiangtan village to visit a girl whose adoption there had been arranged by Dr. Gao after the girl's parents both died of AIDS.

After the reporter and cameraman returned to Beijing, the reporter and I watched and shot listed all the tapes. The following note from my diary shows my reaction to the material: "Wednesday, May 19, 2004. I spent the day working with [X] on his AIDS profiles. He has good material, enough for seven stories." The reporter had originally planned four stories, but on review, he clearly had several more. That day, we decided to expand the series to seven stories, which went to air in the following order and on the following dates:

1. Changes in Wenlou (May 29, 2004) – an overview of the situation in Henan, with a focus on Wenlou Village and government attempts being made there to deal with the AIDS crisis.
2. AIDS orphans offered brighter future (May 30, 2004) – a visit to a government-run Sunshine Family orphanage in Shangcai county (home to the villages of Wenlou, Donghu and Shuangmiao) for children who have lost both parents to AIDS.
3. A tale of two sisters (May 31, 2004) – the story of two sisters, who have lost their parents to AIDS. One was adopted by farmers in Linxiangtan. The other stayed in Donghu to live with her grandfather and aunt, both of whom are HIV positive.

4. AIDS fighter Gao Yaojie (June 1, 2004) – a profile of Dr. Gao Yaojie.
5. Patent sours AIDS cocktail (June 2, 2004) – a report on the problem the PRC faces in supplying an anti-AIDS cocktail to HIV positive patients because of foreign control of a patent for one of the key ingredients of the cocktail.
6. Rural medicare for AIDS lacking (June 3, 2004) – a report on the parlous state of medical services in the AIDS-stricken region, despite the government's attempt to improve the situation.
7. The price of blood (June 4, 2004) – a report on the blood farming business, which triggered the AIDS epidemic in Henan.

The reporter wrote all the first drafts of the scripts and video edited each of the stories. I copy edited all of the scripts. It would be meaningless to attempt to quantify who did how much for the series. The final stories were a mix of the work of the cameraman, the reporter (who also worked as producer and video editor), and myself in terms of post-production. In terms of overall conception and execution, the series was the work of the reporter, with the strong support of the cameraman, who was also extremely interested in the HIV/AIDS story. The extent of my involvement in AIDS Report was minimal compared to the work put in by the reporter and cameraman, but it was also atypically close and extensive for a 'foreign expert' at CCTV-9, given that most of our work was restricted to copy editing or anchoring. The extent of the rewriting I did was also unusual, even given my work with the reporters' group. The reason being that the reporter had plenty of lead time to develop the stories in between gathering the materials in mid-May 2004 and the airing of the first story on May 29. I recorded my involvement in my diary:

I worked with [X] on his AIDS stories on Tuesday (May 25) and Wednesday (May 26). I spent both days working in the reporters' office on the 19th floor. By

the end of Wednesday we had 5 stories written. I did another (Gao Profile) on Saturday (May 29). And I have one to do on the need for a better handling of the AIDS medicines.

On Tuesday, I wrote the “Changes of Wenlou,” “AIDS Orphans,” and “Tale of two sisters” stories that would open the mini-series. [X] had provided the basic outline for the first story, and a draft version of the latter two. With all three I stayed close to his ideas, changing little. Most interesting was skirting the issue of blaming officials directly, when most of the available information is an indictment of their behavior.

Appendix 15 (p. 609) shows the processing of a single story, ‘Changes in Wenlou’, which opened the series on May 29. The first script is the first version of the story that the reporter developed. The second script is my copy edited version, which became the basis of the story. I had reformatted it as a television script. The third script shows the version of the story that was put into the computer scripting system and went to air. It differed only slightly from the copy edited version, with the only significant omission the dropping of a reference to a woman who had lost four sons to AIDS. That element was put aside for a later story.

From conception to the final pre-air versions, senior management were not involved in production of AIDS Report. However, because of the sensitivity of the series, the stories were not put into the news processing system for the political editors to check. Rather, senior management took it upon themselves to review all of the stories. The reporter noted their reaction:

They [senior management] don’t like it at all... See one after another, and say “this can’t be aired, that can’t be aired, that is too negative, that is not true, this is really bad, that is not good. The whole series idea is bad. Why do you want to do this. And I think this cannot help the government. This can make things worse.” But I persuaded them. I write letters to [the Controller ], I persuaded [him] a lot, and I even argued with [the Controller’s supervisor], which somebody else may think I’m too stupid. I argued with [him] and said “if this can’t be aired, I don’t think other things can be aired in the future. Because this particular moment, this is the balanced report. But after half year or one year when we go there, things will become worse, because after the incubation period, more and more people

will get to die.” [He] didn’t answer. I think he is a clever person. He knows everything. And he knows that I am right. But he doesn’t like it. But somebody has to take the responsibility. So finally [the Controller], to take this responsibility. So I still owe him a lot. Because changing a leader [with a different leader], this can never be aired.

However, on the eve of the air date for the first report, senior management in fact rang the reporter and said the series had been cancelled. The reporter contacted me. I recorded the conversation in my diary:

In the taxi, when [X] SMS’ed me and tells me [senior management] has canned the AIDS series. I call [X]. He says [the Controller] must be getting pressure from above. He doesn’t elaborate. But I speculate to [my companions – both Western journalists] that it must be to do with a power struggle between [Politburo member] Li Changchun and [Vice Premier] Wu Yi, and may have something to do with the publication the previous day of the [Deputy Health Minister] Gao Qiang story about the new national crackdown on blood farming in *China Daily* [see below]. We [three foreigners in the taxi] all agree the Party, government and China [PRC] are a bunch of thugs and there is no hope for media reform. I don’t know whether any part of me doubted anything I was saying. Looking at what happened next, I wish I had said “I think it will all work out alright.” (Diary entry May 28, 2004)

The following day, I was watching the midday news bulletin and right on schedule the first AIDS Report story went to air, ‘Changes in Wenlou’. Shortly after the reporter contacted me:

[X] SMS’ed me and tells me [the Controller] has had a “sleepless night” and woke up and said the series could go ahead. The first one – Changes in Wenlou – went to air at 1200, and was repeated in each bulletin. [X] said he thought [the Controller] was “very courageous.” Clearly then, there was no ‘order’ from above. It was pure self-censorship. (Diary entry: Saturday May 29, 2004)

Over the next seven days, one report aired each day several times throughout the 24-hour news cycle. The final story, ‘The Price of Blood’, aired on June 4. The irony of that date, the fifteenth anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen incident, had not been lost on management and according to the reporter contributed to the original decision to ban the series:

[Jirik] So, and the night before the series was going to start, you telephoned me and said [the Controller] had decided not to air it, and the next day he allowed it to air. What happened?

[reporter] I think it is because, they always have meetings... I don't know which level, but maybe the central government, Li Changchun's level whatever. So every week, we have a meeting, and CCTV, look at the date, I think it's around Tuesday... during this particular sensitive period, nothing too sensitive, criticizing the government should be aired, because they are afraid that people may be during this period, of moment, maybe unhappy.

[Jirik] This is the Tiananmen?

[reporter] I think so. But who make the decision not to be aired is [the Controller] again. So I think sometimes is the interpretation of the policies by different, because the central, Li Changchun didn't know we have an AIDS report. He didn't say that AIDS Report cannot be aired. Otherwise this cannot be aired at all. I think it is [senior management] who dare not to air it.

[Jirik] But in the final event, they let every one go to air as you sent it.

Because, I think that is the, in China, I think the reporters should learn the tricks of how to, putting out the information that they want to tell them, and also making balanced reports. Making something that makes some, you know, retreat, sacrifices. And this is how AIDS report can be successfully aired. If I do it my own way, the original way, without the help and the tricks, words, structure, I think this can never be aired.

## **THE TACTICS OF GETTING AIDS REPORT TO AIR**

The most important tactic for getting the AIDS Report to air was one that has not so far been discussed: not getting caught. Had the reporter and cameraman not conducted most of their work in Henan away from the gaze of local officials, they would not have been able to gather the necessary materials to make the stories. Although it is unclear what would have happened had the CCTV-9 crew been detained when local village heads confronted them leaving Donghu, the villagers told them that a cameraperson the previous month had had their tapes destroyed. Harassment of media and AIDS activists is

common in the PRC (Haski, 2005a; Toy, 2006; Zissis, 2006). So the behavior of the CCTV-9 team was unsurprising.

Once safely back in Beijing, developing the stories became a balancing act between what the reporter wanted to say, and what he felt could be said. I wrote in my diary of the decision-making process:

[X] was unsure whether [senior management] would allow the series to air. I said let's do the stories first and then once they're done, show him and we would see his reaction. Already we were in trouble with the promo. [Senior management] viewed it and said there was too many shots of poor people, and nothing of the officials. I suggested they change it to include pictures of [Vice Premier and Health Minister] Wu Yi visiting the AIDS villages in December 2003. This the cameraman who went with [X] did. The promo was quite okay. As [X] noted, I have a genius for turning stories that are negative about the government into stories promoting the government. (Diary entry May 25, 2004)

Within each story, calculations were made about the appropriate language, and how to handle the subjects, especially those we felt might be at risk from recrimination, such as the AIDS activists who had smuggled the crew into Donghu and Shuangmiao, and the doctors who had agreed to speak with us. However, the HIV positive villagers had been adamant at the time of filming that they wanted their faces shown. According to the reporter, they wanted audiences to see them and their plight:

They welcome media. They secretly taking the reporters there. They even got connections, and I have received many calls from the victims. I asked them where did they get this number. They said they get it from the person I interviewed. So they have their communities I think. I think the victims, they like this. But on the other hand, some of my stories, maybe not my stories, but some of other reports may cause troubles for them too, because they have, for to be, you know, objective, we must not use their face and name. They don't know how to protect them. I asked this should be aired you know. And they say "I don't dare any punishment, because I'm going to die, what else should I fear. Just air me." And they say very very tough things I didn't use, because I can't use. They say things with emotions but those are very very tough. I think this is also facts. But because of working for the government, I know I can't use something. I can only make a balanced, on the one hand follow the professionalism of major news, on the other

hand I have to acknowledge I'm working for the national, for the government. So this is, this is the dilemma for being a Chinese journalist, for a government owned TV station.

The balance between representing the subjects of the stories and representing the government was the most difficult problem the reporter faced. He aimed for a human focus in each of the stories, but was careful to include positive references to government action where it was warranted. We wanted the series to not only indicate the plight of the villagers but also the culpability of the government in creating the very situation they were now trying to control. I was also struggling with how far we could go:

While writing the stories, I exercised self-censorship in the sense I was acutely aware of avoiding any direct reference to party and government complicity in the blood farming scandal. I also avoided overly negative constructions and loaded words like "AIDS devastated" etc. (Diary entry May 25, 2004)

The structure of the entire series began with a piece ('Changes in Wenlou') that highlighted efforts the government was making to deal with AIDS by building infrastructure and support services in the affected villages. The reporter sent it to me for copy editing. I noted in my diary: "After I wrote the 'Changes in Wenlou' story, [X] went over it suggesting further modifications, and in cases the removal of references. He said there was no way [senior management] would pass it."

Government efforts were also highlighted in the second piece, which featured an orphanage for children who have lost both parents to AIDS. However, we realized after finishing the piece, that missing was any reference to the fact that the Sunshine Family orphanage, of which there are some twenty in Henan, were closed to children who themselves are HIV-positive, and are also closed to children with one or more living parents, even if they were HIV-positive or had AIDS and were in no condition to care for their children (Cai, 2005 and discussion with the reporter). On reflection, these were important elements both the reporter and I had missed:

[reporter] [Y]ou only said the only lack, that we should find the AIDS orphan with AIDS. But if we talk before, maybe I can find one, because those people the only fate is to die. I should find one. And I can find one. But I didn't have this idea. So I regret a little bit, we didn't talk a little bit earlier, or somebody who also from the Western parts.

Nevertheless, as the series developed, we began to feel more confident about a narrative strategy that we believed would lead the viewer to conclude what we felt we could not say. Although that was perhaps little more than wishful thinking, it became the rationalization we used to justify what we were doing. Already in the third piece the discursive structure of the series was beginning to question the government's care strategy. In 'A tale of two sisters', the reporter examined an alternate care strategy, which Dr. Gao Yaojie developed, of placing AIDS orphans in foster homes, or leaving them in the care of family and relatives even if the latter were HIV positive but capable of providing care, rather than institutionalizing the children who have lost their parents. Story #4 following that provided the back story for 'A tale of two sisters', profiling Dr. Gao and her struggle to legalize the adoption of children orphaned by AIDS. In 'AIDS Fighter Gao Yaojie', rather than suggest that orphanages are only part of the solution, the script used the tactic of allowing Gao's struggle to expand the range of care options to speak for itself. Figure 6 shows that part of the script discussing the legalization of adoption of AIDS orphans.

Figure 6: Script element for 'AIDS fighter Gao Yaojie'

[Video: AIDS orphans]	[Reporter] Currently, there is no law allowing people to adopt AIDS orphans, but that may change soon.
[Video: close up government document legalizing adoption for AIDS orphans]	[Reporter] This document is the first of its kind in China. It's official approval for the adoption of AIDS orphans. Doctor Gao says it's a breakthrough that vindicates her strategy.
[Video: Wu Yi visiting Henan and meeting]	[Reporter] Behind the document is Health



Gao Yaojie]	Minister and Vice Premier, Wu Yi. In December last year [2003], Wu Yi visited AIDS stricken villages in Henan. While she was there, she had a private, off camera meeting with Doctor Gao. The plight of AIDS orphans was central to their discussion.
[Video: Gao Yaojie]	[Soundbite: Gao Yaojie] Many couples want to adopt these children. Society can solve this problem, if the government has a good policy. All these letters prove this point.
[Video: letters Gao has received]	[Reporter] Gao Yaojie has received over 10 thousand letters from people wanting to help her cause...

The discursive construction of AIDS in Henan points not only to government culpability in triggering the epidemic, then indifference, but also to bungled government intervention, once the scale of the tragedy was known (Haski, 2005a). Watching the reporter's raw video and listening to the victims' stories, the latter problem was clear. Stories #5 and #6 focused on the medical care situation for HIV positive adults and those dying of AIDS in the stricken villages. 'Patent sours AIDS cocktail' looked at the problem the PRC is facing because of a patent that prevented the domestic production of a key component of the regime of drugs required to control HIV. The piece used the tactic of shifting the blame for the problem to third parties (in this case a foreign company, a typical target of PRC criticism when the government wants to deflect attention from its own actions or inaction). But then in a rebuke to the official care system, 'Rural medicare for AIDS lacking' visited the home of an HIV positive couple, where boxes of drugs distributed free at the local clinic were gathering dust. The clinic could not afford patient aftercare to check HIV positive villagers were taking their medicine correctly and sticking to the drug regime that had been prescribed. Here the

tactic was to let the images speak for themselves. The boxes of drugs gathering dust told the story of bungled intervention, without any comment from the reporter. Haski's (2005a) work corroborates the observation the camera was making:

Officially, the government has started distributing free antiretrovirals, the treatment that can stop the progress of the disease. The leadership has granted free education for children of AIDS patients and help for their communities. In reality, these treatments have been inadequate; a majority of patients rejected them because of side effects, while others have been trying all kinds of medicine, including experiments from Chinese army research centers. Many have opted against treatment altogether - and anxiously wait for their death. Worse, some were abandoned, like one man I met who was clearly developing the disease and who had been left waiting for a month for the results of his blood test. In dozens of interviews last year [2004], I did not meet a single patient who was correctly treated. (Haski, 2005a)

However, it was only in the final story, which had the working title 'The Price of Blood,' that the reporter directly addressed the government's culpability in the HIV/AIDS scandal, in particular for triggering the epidemic through its involvement (or lack of it) in the blood farming operations in Henan in the early 1990s.<sup>157</sup> The problem we faced in developing the script was how to address the government's culpability, without the accusation coming from the reporter. Originally, the reporter used an AIDS activist to tell the story with the following quote (original text):

[Soundbite Chinese with English subtitles: AIDS Activist] In Henan, HIV spread not through illegal behavior, like drug and prostitution, but through blood donation. Unhygienic blood collection was also practiced in 23 provinces. But since blood collection in Henan was government-sponsored in the name to benefit the poor, the situation there is much [more] serious than other areas.

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<sup>157</sup> Although I am sympathetic to the argument that the market not the government was responsible for the 'blood money' paid for plasma in Henan, where impoverished farmers were desperate to improve their earnings, as the regulator of the market, the government was ultimately responsible for the conditions under which the epidemic developed, even if the level of its direct involvement in the market remains unclear. Even if the government was attempting to 'help' the farmers by allowing the blood market to flourish, its indifference to their plight once the epidemic was underway and subsequent bungling of intervention and attempted cover up including the construction of Wenlou as a 'model' village, are beyond dispute.

I copy edited this, changing what would be a soundbite from the activist in Chinese with English subtitles that would read:

[Soundbite Chinese with English subtitles: AIDS Activist] In Henan, HIV did not spread through practices like needle sharing and prostitution, but through unhygienic blood donations. This happens in many provinces. But in Henan local officials condoned the practice, making the problem worse.

Apart from dropping the reference to twenty-three provinces, which I felt was redundant, I changed “government-sponsored” to “condoned,” since we were not clear how much of the blood farming was a government initiative and how much happened outside of any government supervision, as an effect of the market.

However, we then concluded that I had taken the original quote too far away from the original to warrant inclusion any longer as a quote. We decided to drop the reference to government sponsorship or tacit approval from the quote. The new version was as follows:

[Soundbite: AIDS Activist] In Henan, HIV did not spread through practices like needle sharing and prostitution, but through unhygienic blood donations.

[Reporter: Voice over] Wan explains that this is a problem in many provinces. But in Henan, the dangers were little understood. Even officials could not imagine the consequences of their actions.

But the problem now was that the narrative had so watered down the reference to government culpability that both the reporter and I felt we were no longer making the point that was at stake, that the government was largely responsible for the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Henan. Moreover, we had created the very problem we were hoping to avoid. The reporter was now making the claim that the government was culpable, even if the version we were using was so watered down to render the accusation almost unnoticeable (“Even officials could not imagine the consequences of their actions”).

The story was due to air in several days, and we were at a loss how to proceed. Then quite by chance, the PRC's English language daily, *China Daily*, on May 28 published a story that provided exactly the evidence we needed. The government had launched a nationwide campaign on May 27 to tackle unsafe blood collection and supplies. Executive Vice-Minister Gao Qiang of the Ministry of Health had attended the launch and had remarked on his shock at the extent of the problem of HIV transmission through blood transfusions. The relevant part of the *China Daily* article read as follows (Feng, 2004):

Gao said in the early 1990s, poor governmental management of the blood market led to many infections among farmers, many of whom sold plasma to blood stations.

Thousands of them have now become AIDS patients, and many of them are dying in many poverty-stricken areas of China. They are so pitiable, Gao said.

Thanks to the fight against illegal blood stations in the late 1990s and restless efforts to strengthen blood management in recent years, the blood supply is now much safer, Gao said. (Feng, 2004)

The *China Daily* reporter was using the tactic of acceptable sources, in this case a high-ranking government official. We decided to do exactly the same, and in order to further protect CCTV-9, use the exact words of the *China Daily* article, "poor governmental management of the blood market," in order to add a second layer of insulation between ourselves and the incriminating statement. The version we finally settled on was as follows:

[Soundbite: AIDS Activist] In Henan, HIV didn't spread through practices like needle sharing and prostitution, but through unhygienic blood donations. It's a problem in many provinces.

[Reporter: Voice over] The central government has now launched a nationwide campaign to clean up the blood business. And since measures were stepped up in the late 1990s, Deputy Health Minister Gao Qiang says China's blood supply has

become much safer. He blamed poor governmental management of the blood market for infections among farmers.

Although the reporter found video of the press conference with pictures of Gao speaking, the video was shot from the back of the room using the camera's inbuilt microphone. Ambient noise drowned out Gao's voice. So we did not have the quotation used by *China Daily*. Nevertheless we had the video necessary to make the story work. Although the reporter would be making the accusation, he was citing a government official in the context of the government's "nationwide campaign to clean up the blood business," tactically placing the accusation below acknowledgement of government action on the issue.

I have already mentioned the sensitivity of AIDS Report, its proximity to the fifteenth anniversary of the Tiananmen incident, and the decision and then its reversal by senior management to ban the entire series. So I should not have been surprised when 'The Price of Blood' went to air several days later on June 4, only to discover on watching that missing was the reference to Gao Qiang citing the government's mismanagement of the blood market. From my diary:

The last of the AIDS reports went out. Somebody had taken "governmental" out of the line attributing the blame to the government. (Dairy entry June 4, 2004)

I later discussed the omission with the reporter:

[Jirik] When we were writing the stories, the very last story, you took out the word...

[Reporter] "governmental" [laughs] Because we have already many stories, that is the last story. I do hope that we, being aired is the top priority. If one word or another been, especially irritating and can't be aired. That is not worth it. The most important thing is to let the picture tell the story and let the major important issue. But if, maybe you think that the major issues was the poor governmental management. I think I thought twice, and I think I got the influence from [senior management], I regret it a lot, because [senior management], because the day when the story should be aired is especially sensitive moment, it's the anniversary

of June 4<sup>th</sup> [1989 Tiananmen incident]. It's happened to be the day. But the picture itself had people die. It has tombs and people wearing black, something. It sounds like a very, people may think I'm stupid you know. But [senior management] says "[X], this is the last piece. I hope it can be aired safely, don't use anything that I may think is inappropriate." So I think under his encouragement, or his persuasion, I changed that "governmental," to let it pass safely. But it really works, I think with that word, [senior management] may never ever let it air. I really think so, so that is the only way to air it.

In the final analysis, from my point of view, we had failed to say what was core to the story. But against that, the reporter had to weigh his future at the channel, and to keep the story in context. While it was a breakthrough for CCTV-9, as I shall show in the following chapter the kind of work for which the reporters' group was responsible tended to sink without trace at CCTV-9. So can I blame him for failing to take a risk that bore no potential consequences for me and meant little in terms of the general tenor of news at the channel?

Following the end of the series, the stories were posted to the CCTV website, and the reporter re-inserted the reference in the final story to Gao Qiang's acknowledgement of government mishandling of the blood market.<sup>158</sup> Several prominent PRC media including *Xinhua* and *People's Daily* picked up and ran one or more of the stories.<sup>159</sup> As already noted, the final story, 'Price of Blood', was entered into the CNN World Report 2005 annual awards and was one of three finalists in the Ongoing Issues category. I noted in my diary (May 31, 2004) a brief exchange: "[Senior management] asked me what I thought of the AIDS stories. I said I had put a lot of work into them and I thought they were good. He said 'So do I'."

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<sup>158</sup> Available at <http://www.cctv.com/english/special/C12295/20040614/102104.shtml>.

<sup>159</sup> See <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2004/May/96831.htm> (CCTV)  
[http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200406/01/eng20040601\\_144998.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200406/01/eng20040601_144998.html) (*People's Daily*)  
<http://www.humanrights.cn/zt/AIDS/..%5CAIDS/200502005624142601.htm> (*Xinhua*)

## **DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

### **Discussion**

AIDS Report showed the limits of pushing the reporting envelope at CCTV-9 in 2004. Other stories done by several of the reporters were equally as hard hitting, so I am not suggesting that AIDS Report was exceptional. Rather it was typical of the best work the reporters' group did.

The series showed almost the full range of tactics reporters deploy in the PRC to get the story out. Apart from those tactics Tong discussed, the tactic of reporting a story before the CPD or SARFT can issue a directive banning further coverage was also typical of the work of the reporters' group, although AIDS Report did not deploy this tactic, since AIDS is an ongoing topic, which cannot be reduced to a single story.

The pressure journalists feel serving as both servants and critics of political authority was also evident in AIDS Report, as the reporter was constantly forced to frame what he felt was the truth in terms that would be acceptable to management, who were clearly uncomfortable with the stories, but still let them go to air. Critics of PRC media who simply call media mouthpieces of the Party and government ignore the constant tension associated with news making and the attempts journalists make to expand the reporting envelope. The series also pointed to the sense of social responsibility that journalists in the PRC consider a core professional criterion. Against the objectivist ontology that frames mainstream news practice in commercialized and public service broadcast systems in many countries, in the PRC, a journalist sees herself as not only telling a story, but also making a change. One core aim of news is to bring to the attention of government problems that need to be addressed. At best this is a peripheral aim of news making in most commercialized and public service broadcast systems, which

relegate 'activist' news making to the margins of news making in general, rather than pursue change as a core news value.

My own involvement in what was one of the most controversial series of stories CCTV-9 did in 2004 shows that PRC media are not closed to external influence, but actually welcome input and support for their work, if it is offered in an appropriate manner. If one of my great failings at CCTV-9 was a tendency to dismiss my colleagues' work when it conflicted with what I knew of news making from my own background and experience, in *AIDS Report* the journalist and I found a workable middle ground. In drawing attention to my role in the series, I am not attempting to foreground myself so much as suggest that if television is always a team game, production at CCTV-9, although no different from television news production in general, had the added element of the occasional heavy presence of a third party providing language advice and advice about how to frame and shape stories for an ideal audience which did not share the native language of the reporter.

What the production of *AIDS Report* showed was the collective and hybrid character of news production at CCTV-9, the complex interplay of three persons (reporter, cameraman, copy editor), who worked together to generate a narrative that on screen privileged the role of the reporter. This is not to downplay in any way the work of the reporter, but rather to highlight the complexity of television news production at CCTV-9, which should give pause for thought about the kind of naïve claims critics of the Chinese media sometimes make about reporters functioning as little more than government and Party mouthpieces.

Whether the final product was as good as we thought it was is another matter. I noted that our narrative strategy was to assume the audience would draw the 'right' conclusion from the stories, without the stories addressing directly the issue of



government culpability in the spread of HIV and AIDS in Henan Province. I have no evidence that that was the case. What we did was shift the responsibility for making meaning away from the stories to the audience.

Although audiences do make meaning, the presumed ability of audiences to read between the lines in countries such as the PRC where censorship and self-censorship is the norm not the exception in news making does not ensure that the intentions of the reporter are what the audience reads into the story (for a discussion of the PRC audience reading between the lines, see Lull, 1991). Given the range of meanings audiences read into commercial and public service news in countries like the United States where self-censorship without censorship is the norm, logic dictates that an even greater range of meanings will be read into stories by audiences in circumstances where the narrative structure often only alludes to rather than directly addresses the intentions of the news maker. That audiences in the PRC are suspicious about news content in no way guarantees that they will guess what the journalist's intentions are on any given story.

In addition, although we said we were concerned to protect our sources, consistent harassment of AIDS activists in Henan meant that people with whom we worked were in constant danger. Whether AIDS Report contributed to that danger in any way is not known. However, in July 2004, a little over a month after the series aired, a group of AIDS activists in Henan was taken into custody during an AIDS conference on a range of apparently trumped up charges ranging from disturbing public order to theft (SCMP, 2004b). Those detained included the HIV-positive activist who smuggled the reporter and cameraman into Shuangmiao Village.

Finally, even if local governments in Henan appeared to be making an effort to address the AIDS situation in 2004, more recent reports suggest that they have all but given up, including in Wenlou, and that more corrupt elements are seeking only to profit

from the situation. In early 2006, *China Daily* (2006b) reported on an emerging corruption scandal centered on HIV/AIDS funding to Wenlou Village (The *China Daily* article is cited in Black and White Cat, 2007). *China Daily* cited Dr. Gao Yaojie:

I have not been to Wenlou village for half a year... You go and tell your friends and readers not to donate money or material to Wenlou village. This is just a PR project to deceive the public. They even dare to deceive Premier Wen Jiabao [who visited Wenlou in February 2005]. It does not matter how much you donate. This is a 'black hole' and an inscrutable [sic] trap. There are quite a few more 'black holes' in Henan like this one. (China Daily, 2006b)

Ahead of Premier Wen's second visit in November 2007, HIV/AIDS activist Hu Jia (2007) blogged about the villagers' concerns ahead of the visit:

Over the last three days, a number of villagers in Wenlou have sent me e-messages, saying they are uneasy about Premier Wen's visit. This is in marked contrast to the anticipation and excitement before Premier Wen's last visit. Nearly three years have passed and things have got even worse there. Wenlou is just a stage for government departments to display false achievements to the outside world, and one often takes over where the other left off. (Cited on Black and White Cat, 2007)

Shortly after he posted these comments, police on December 27, 2007 arrested Hu Jia on charges of "subversion against the state" (Chan, 2007). Hu's trial on March 18, 2008 lasted three hours. On April 3, Hu was sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison for "incitement to subvert state power" (AFP, 2008).<sup>160</sup>

## Summary

In this chapter, I have addressed the work of the reporters' group. I have argued that the reporters' group provided a best case example of the news making that could be done at CCTV-9. Using a range of tactics to evade censorship, the CCTV-9 reporters worked hard to provide a small number of professionally accomplished stories. Following

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<sup>160</sup> The charges against Hu related to articles he posted on the Internet about human rights issues and speaking to foreign reporters. However, his crime appears to have been to speak out against human rights abuses in the PRC ahead of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

the May 2004 relaunch, the reporters developed the series China's Challenges, which focused on what the group considered the most urgent problems facing the state. In AIDS Report, a single reporter developed seven stories on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Henan Province. Both series were praised by senior management, even if in the case of AIDS Report, they almost cancelled the series for fear of the potential for trouble should SARFT, the CPD or even the Politburo take exception to the stories, since Politburo member Li Changchun, whose name does not appear in the series, was responsible for the May 2004 relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International and was governor of Henan during the blood farming scandal that triggered the HIV and AIDS epidemic in the province.

The production of the HIV/AIDS story was a paradigm example of Pan's (2000) and Pan & Lu's (2003) account of the manner in which reporters evade the strategies of the power structure to tell a different story than would be the case were they simply mouthpieces of Party and government. Despite the concern of senior management that the series "cannot help the government," the reporter changed just enough in the stories to get them to air. On display in the manner in which the HIV/AIDS story was handled was the long history of journalism in the PRC: social responsibility, the demand to speak truth to power, even at great personal risk, a complex calculation of possibilities as to exactly where the limit to the story could be found.

The complex conjuncture of forces that enable and constrain the journalistic field was also on display. Each calculation about the story was made in the context of a range of pressures, from the possibility of pushing too far on an issue in which a Politburo member had a stake to the problem of the final and most critical story airing on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tiananmen Incident. But in the final analysis, the habitus that is distinctive of Chinese journalism asserted itself against the threat of provoking the

authorities. The urge to speak truth to power was evident not only in the series, but in management's decision to let the series go to air.

Evident in both *China's Challenges* and *AIDS Report* was the core news value that distinguishes journalism in the PRC from mainstream media in commercialized and public service systems in countries such as the United States and Australia. Beyond a concern for balance and objectivity, PRC reporters take seriously the social responsibility associated with news making and strive to identify and inform the government of problems that need to be addressed, even as they struggle with the dual role of both serving and critiquing political authority. The multiple pressures on journalists in the PRC results in what He Zhou (2000c) has called 'ideological dissonance,' which forces them to confront the government they serve in a manner quite different from the service journalists render politics and business in commercial and public service broadcast systems where what I have called 'ideological consonance' is the norm.

How effective was the work of the reporters' group at CCTV-9 is difficult to gauge. Although the OSC blueprint and attitude of senior management suggested that they believed that CCTV International could only compete with the likes of CNN-I and BBC-WS as a news channel if a strong reporters' group was at the core of the channel, the fact was that the work of the reporters' group tended to disappear, merged as it was within the work of the general news group, itself only one production group vying for the audience's attention.

In Chapter 7, I discussed the manner in which entrenched interests within the channel derailed the plans of SARFT and senior management to change CCTV-9 from being a general purpose broadcast channel into a news channel. Not surprisingly, despite the best efforts of senior management to provide the reporters' group with the support it needed to develop as the core of the news channel CCTV International was intended to

be, by the time the relaunch was over, clearly CCTV-9 had not changed direction, and the work of the reporters' group, despite series like China's Challenges and AIDS Report, would remain marginal rather than central to the overall development of the channel.

## **Chapter 11: Content**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter I discussed the work of the reporters' group, which management championed as a model for the type of journalism that CCTV International should pursue if its aspiration to become a globally competitive news channel was to be achieved. However, I also noted that stories by reporters only amounted to a fairly small volume of news stories or air time, which was further diluted in the overall context of the channel when feature programming was taken into account (see p. 207, Figure 1). Moreover, in earlier chapters, I have suggested that the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International in May 2004 did not follow the plan laid out in the OSC blueprint. As a result, the revamped channel was more of a continuation with its past than a break, which is what the OSC blueprint called for. In this chapter, I continue with the comparative analysis of the channel pre- and post-relaunch. I look at content. Specifically, I look at general news content to see what was on the news and what this says about what kind of channel CCTV-9 is and how the news was made.

The explanation of the content sample and decision to code the rundowns for the 1200 and 2400 news bulletins and the stories from the 1200 bulletin was given in Chapter 6: Methodology. The coding sheets are provided in Appendix 2 and samples of the coding of the bulletin rundowns and scripts are provided in Appendix 3. In this chapter, I begin with an explanation of the bulletin as a whole and what it said about the news. Following this, I look at the scripts and what they say about the news and about the choices available to news makers in the news making process. Given the heavy reliance on CCTV for domestic and foreign policy news and APTN and Reuters for international news (see p. 319), not surprisingly the rundowns and scripts pointed to the highly

constrained and regimented news making process analyzed in Chapter 8: Editorial and Chapter 9: Production, which allowed little space for the kind of experimentation that was evident in the best of the reporters' stories.

What was clear from surveying content was that, as participant observation and interviews had showed, continuity as much as change characterized the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International. Of more interest however with respect to content was the range and distribution of topics that news addressed, the voices in stories, the geographic dispersal of stories and their orientation.

In a country as vast and diverse as the PRC, one would expect a wide range of datelines and a richness of content that would do justice to the myriad peoples and cultures of the PRC (including Hong Kong and Macao) and Taiwan. However, this was not the case. Rather, what the survey of content showed was a narrow range of topics and datelines and a predominance of official voices. In this chapter, I discuss why so restricted a news was the only news possible.

The research question this chapter addressed was as follows:

- With the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International in May 2004, over time what evidence of change emerged?

The intermediate and subordinate questions were as follows:

- What was the content of CCTV-9 pre- and post-relaunch?
  - What was the content of the bulletins and scripts?
  - What was the orientation of the news?
  - What topics predominated?
  - What places were in the news?
  - Who was referred to and who spoke in the news?

- What did the survey of content over time indicate about the manner in which the May 2004 relaunch was operationalized?
  - What did content say about the editorial process at CCTV-9?
  - What did content say about the production process as CCTV-9?
  - What did content say about the work of the reporters' group at CCTV-9?
  - What did content contribute to the triangulation of data?

#### **THE NEWS BULLETIN**

I have already noted (see p. 251) that the OSC blueprint called the CCTV News the “flagship” news program of the channel, providing Chinese perspective on domestic and international stories. Clearly senior management were relatively happy with the bulletin since little attention was paid to general news in the May 2004 relaunch, especially compared to the internal struggle over feature programming (see p. 211 & p. 215) and concern for specialist news and new news-oriented programs evident from the OSC blueprint of planned programs, most of which did not come to fruition (see p. 217). The only noteworthy change made to the general news bulletin was its re-positioning at the top of every hour with the shift to a rolling news service and the increase in the number of bulletins, although the actual weekly duration of general news only increased slightly, given that several of the new bulletins were fifteen minutes News Updates (see Figure 2, p. 208).

What I want to note first about the CCTV News is that the term ‘news bulletin’ does not adequately describe what actually went to air during the half hour of the news or fifteen minutes of a News Update, just as to describe CCTV International as a rolling news service ignores how much of the programming was not news, but features,



entertainment programming and documentaries (see Figure 1, p. 207). What went to air during a news bulletin was in fact a mixture of elements that together were designed to create the impression of news. But like its competitors such as BBC-WS and CNN-I that it sought to emulate, CCTV-9 had evolved as a hybrid between news stories and ‘filler,’ elements of a bulletin that either did not substantively add to the information provided in the stories or represented content for which the news staff were not responsible.

### **Filler**

Filler is extremely important for news production, because the more of it, the less news actually has to be made, relieving pressure on the news making system as a whole. In the conveyor belt construction of reality that characterizes news making, filler is an indispensable element. At CCTV-9 filler took two forms: repeat stories, and non-news filler.

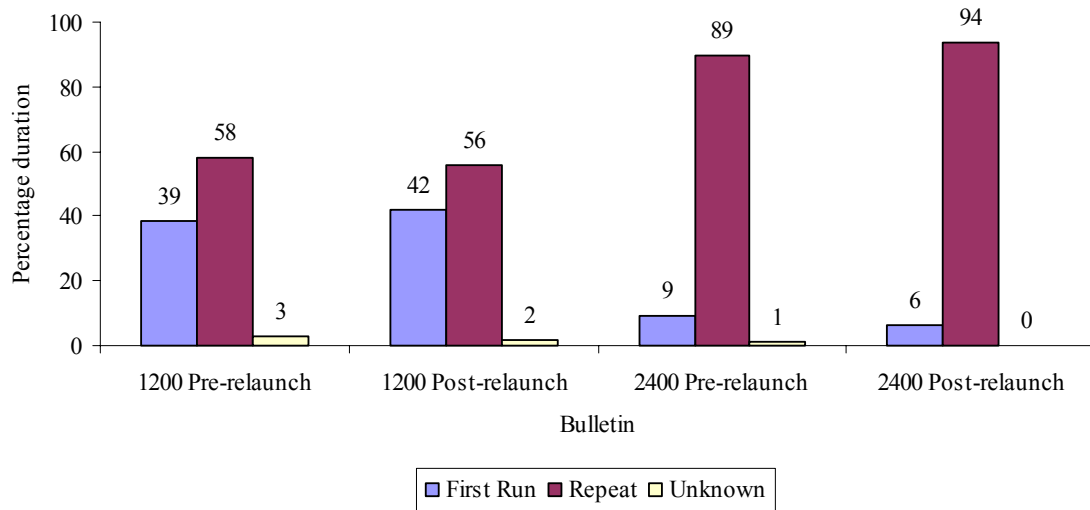
### ***Repeat Stories***

I have already discussed the key strategy CCTV-9 used to reduce the amount of news that had to be made, the use of repeat stories (see p. 319). On the one hand, strictly speaking repeat stories are not filler since a global news service must repeat certain stories to ensure that its audiences, which change as the world turns, have every chance of seeing those stories that have ‘legs,’ a subjective measure news editors use to determine how long a story should ‘run’ (i.e. remain in the news cycle). On the other hand, because they functioned as filler, repeat stories (stories that would continue to run) were a boon for news makers.<sup>161</sup> This is evident from Figure 7 (see below), which shows the proportion of new and repeat programming pre- and post-relaunch.

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<sup>161</sup> The usual practice at a broadcaster, especially a news channel, would be to constantly update stories that have legs. However, this practice was carried out only in a haphazard fashion at CCTV-9, with directors tending not to update stories, if they could avoid doing so.

Figure 7: Proportion of new to repeat programming, 1200 & 2400 News



The efficiency of the news production system is evident from Figure 7, with repeat programming playing an important role in filling the bulletin. Repeats are also far more evident at midnight than midday. The midnight bulletin came at the end of the evening shift. It was staffed by a three-quarter team<sup>162</sup> and prompted little interest from producers and directors responsible for updating the news, especially in the absence of management, the primary target audience (see p. 310). Midnight also followed the prime time CCTV News bulletin, which aired at 2200 pre-relaunch and 2100 post-relaunch. Those bulletins were fully staffed, closely watched by management, and had a far higher proportion of new stories than did the midnight bulletin.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>162</sup> The midday news team was bigger than the overnight team but not as big as the prime time team, which handled bulletins beginning with the 1700 CCTV News.

<sup>163</sup> According to staff, the 2200 (post-relaunch) and 2100 (pre-relaunch) CCTV News were considered the key bulletins of the day, since they carried the core news from that day's *Xinwen Lianbo*, the national nightly news on CCTV-1, which aired at 1900. As a result, management closely watched these bulletins, which reduced the likelihood of a mistake going to air.

The concept of the midnight bulletin being down time reflected in Figure 7 further reinforces my earlier observation (see p. 308) that news production had not switched away from a focus on prime time post-relaunch, due to the peculiarity of CCTV-9 operating as a window on both China and the world. However, although midnight Beijing might be dead time for news out of the PRC, at that time in Europe it ranged from mid-evening in Moscow through to early evening in London. In New York it was midday. Had CCTV International been true to its slogan, the news teams would have been working hard at midnight Beijing time to provide audiences worldwide with Chinese perspective on stories out of Europe, the Middle East and Africa while looking ahead to the day's developments in the Americas. Figure 7 suggests this was not the case.

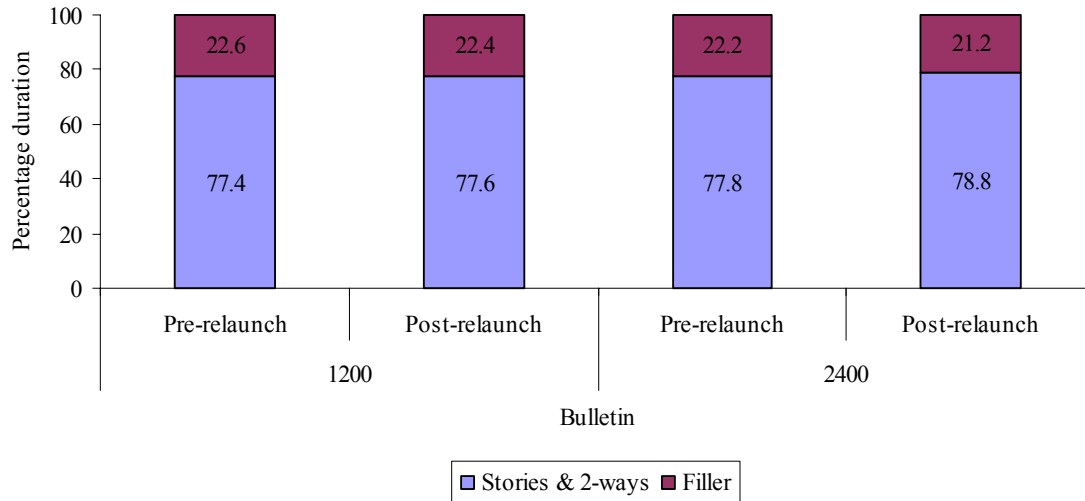
### ***Non-news Filler***

Bracketing repeat stories and treating them as part of the news in recognition of the changing audience, non-news filler is that part of the bulletin that was either produced outside of the newsroom or provided little to no information that was not carried in the news itself. Figure 8 shows the bulletin pre- and post-relaunch broken down into its constituent parts, with filler consistently making up a little over twenty percent by duration of the bulletin, further evidence of the continuity of the channel pre- and post-relaunch.

Given that the proportion of news to filler stayed almost the same regardless of the bulletin time and regardless of whether the bulletin was pre- or post-relaunch, an index of non-news filler across all four bulletins for which rundowns were collected can be calculated for the following attributes:

- a. Opening & closing credits
- b. Headlines & reminders of the headlines towards the end of the bulletin

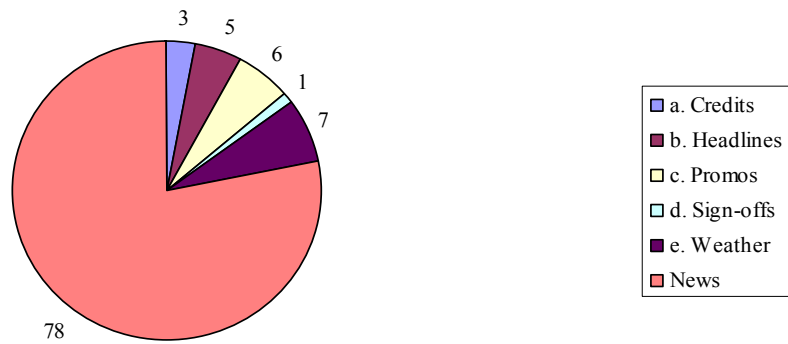
Figure 8: Proportion of news to filler, 1200 & 2400 News



- c. Promotional spots for other programs
- d. Anchor's sign off at the end of the bulletin
- e. Weather

Figure 9 shows this index of filler. I included headlines in filler since they repeated what was already in the bulletin. The weather was supplied by a production house and was a review of the previous day's weather more than a forecast. The use of a pie chart to represent filler graphically shows how much of the news was non-news filler, almost a quarter, on average six-and-a-half minutes for which the news staff effectively were not responsible in any thirty-minute bulletin.

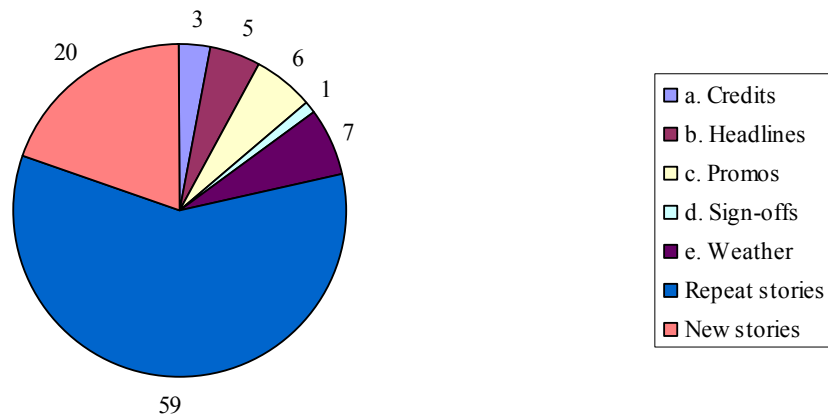
Figure 9: Percentage of news & filler pre- and post-relaunch, 1200 & 2400 News



### *All filler*

If repeat stories are factored into the above index, then the picture in (Figure 10) emerges for all forms of filler, leaving about a fifth of the bulletin for new news stories.

Figure 10: Same as Figure 9 (News & Filler), but with repeat stories factored in

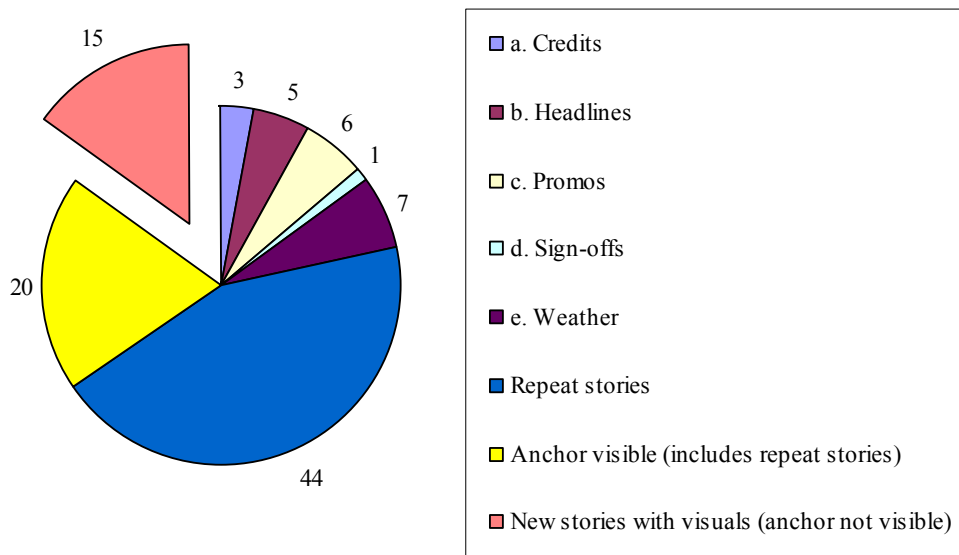


Finally, if the anchor's introduction to each story is treated as filler and factored into the index, then the picture in Figure 11 emerges. I see this as a valid move, since I consider as filler any time an anchor appears on the news since this is time lost to the possibility of providing visual information. Showing what is lost to news by including the anchor as filler and combining this with how little of any bulletin is actually visually oriented new information indicates what a news bulletin at CCTV-9 actually consisted of, about fifteen percent of visually relevant new news, and the rest, one or another form of filler.<sup>164</sup> In other words, only about four-and-a-half minutes of any 1200 or 2400 news bulletin on average pre- and post relaunch was new, visually oriented news. The rest was either a repeat of previous news, the anchor on screen and talking, or some other form of filler.

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<sup>164</sup> CCTV-9 is typical here. The same analysis could be made of any broadcast news and would probably find similar results. In fact, the waste of news time lost to advertising in commercial systems would probably even further reduce the news on commercial services compared to that provided by public service broadcasters. At the time of data collection CCTV-9 did not have commercials, which were first introduced in January 2005.

Figure 11: News & filler with repeat stories and anchor onscreen during new stories factored in



That the anchor was on average on screen for some twenty-six percent (almost eight minutes) of each thirty-minute bulletin (reading headlines, story introductions or signing off) indicates on the one hand the responsibility that went with the position. On the other hand it was time lost to visually compelling information and the prominence of the anchor within the bulletin contributed to the ‘representational’ capital I have already discussed (see p. 259) that was associated with the role, over and against its irrelevance to the news making process.

## The News

Acknowledging my somewhat idiosyncratic attitude to the role of news anchors in general and accepting for the sake of discussion that the introduction to each story was relevant since it did impart information even if that information was not visual, then what else can the rundowns tell us about the news bulletin at CCTV-9?

### *Types of stories*

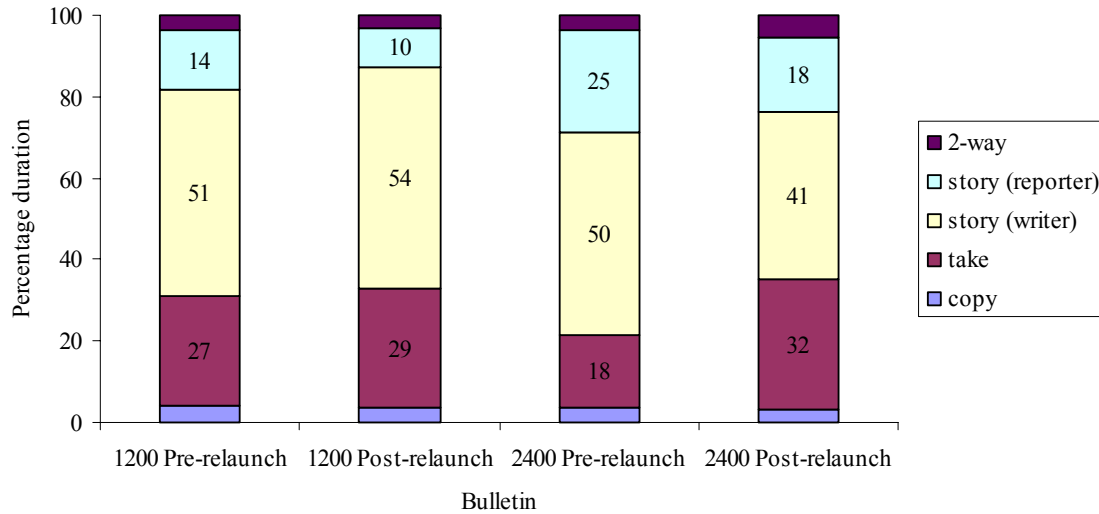
The channel produced four types of stories: copy, take, (writer or reporter) stories and 2-ways (see p. 180 for definitions). The proportion by duration of the four types of stories at CCTV-9 is shown in Figure 12. The same general pattern observed throughout the dissertation of continuity rather than change characterizing CCTV-9 pre- and post-relaunch is again obvious, although the midnight bulletin pre-relaunch did show a slight preference for stories at the expense of takes. Post-relaunch, the midnight bulletin fell into line with the midday bulletins. Most of the news (copy stories, take stories and writer stories) was made by the writers and foreign experts. The reporters contributed the remainder, including all the 2-ways, providing just over twenty percent or almost five minutes of news per bulletin for the four bulletins coded.<sup>165</sup> However, from Figure 12 the contribution to the bulletin from the reporters actually fell post-relaunch, belying the rhetoric of management about the importance of strengthening the reporting group for the development of the channel.

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<sup>165</sup> That five minutes included repeats.



Figure 12: Comparison of story types, 1200 & 2400 News



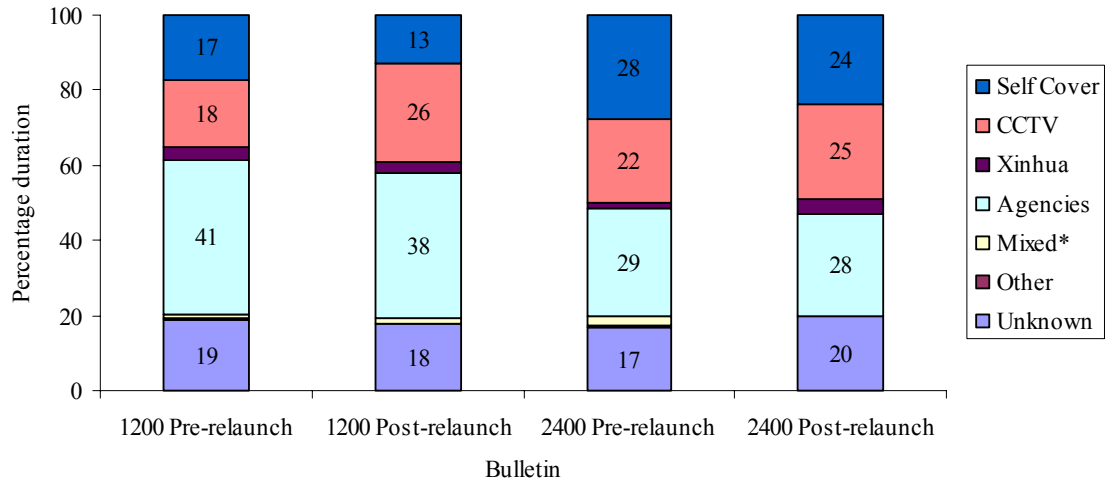
### Sources

The division of labor within the bulletin reflected the sources available for making the news (Figure 13, below).<sup>166</sup> Self cover, for example, matched the value of the 2-ways and reporter stories combined in Figure 12. The sources of the writer stories, takes and copy stories shown in Figure 12 were primarily the international news agencies and CCTV (see Figure 13).

From Figure 13, the single biggest source of the news was Reuters and APTN, contributing about a third of the news overall (Figure 14). Their contribution stayed

<sup>166</sup> The high proportion of ‘unknown’ in both Figures could suggest an analytical problem. An ‘unknown’ resulted in the coding when writers and reporters did not list their story sources, a requirement of the production process but one that was routinely ignored. However, during observation, I could detect no pattern in the failure to list story sources, and I have concluded that the ‘unknowns’ can be ignored for the sake of analysis. However, I have drawn only the most tentative of conclusions from the above data, as I must acknowledge that beyond observation, I have no evidence that the distribution of the ‘unknowns’ according to source, were it known, might not deliver different results to those shown here.

Figure 13: Proportion of news by source, 1200 & 2400 News



\* Mixed - a story that combined international news agency sources and PRC sources

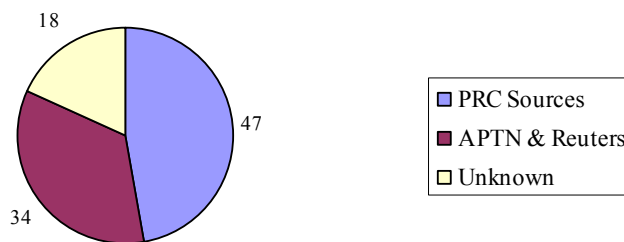
roughly the same pre- and post-relaunch. CCTV (channels 1 & 4)<sup>167</sup> and the Reporting Group supplied about the same amount of news. Combined they supplied slightly more pre-relaunch compared to post-relaunch and somewhat more than the agencies (see Figure 14). As noted, the proportion supplied by the Reporting Group fell after the relaunch, with the gap in the bulletin being filled primarily by CCTV stories, of which the proportion increased after the relaunch. The other sources combined provided only a very small proportion of the bulletin.

Within the twenty-four hour news cycle, the decrease in agency stories and proportionate increase in CCTV and self cover pre- and post-relaunch when comparing the 1200 and 2400 bulletin reflected the shift in focus as the world turned. The midnight bulletin was largely a repeat of the prime time CCTV News, which was the bulletin

<sup>167</sup> Observation indicated CCTV-1 was used far more than CCTV-4. However, writers rarely distinguished between the two in their scripts. Hence that information was not available from the rundowns.

immediately before the midnight bulletin. Prime time focused heavily on PRC news. During the night and early morning in Beijing, the news was happening elsewhere, and the primary source of new stories was from outside of the PRC, hence the greater

Figure 14: Percentage duration of PRC and agency sources, 1200 & 2400 News



proportion of agency stories pre-relaunch compared to post-relaunch.

Apart from the shifting relationship between different sources, what is striking about the sources is their general paucity. Observation showed no other significant sources of news than CCTV, *Xinhua*, the international agencies, and self cover. Figure 13 bears out that observation. For a country as large and diverse as the PRC, CCTV-9 drew on a surprisingly small pool of resources for its news. In large part this practice reflected the channel's evolution as a translation service for *Xinwen Lianbo*, adding the international news agencies when they became available and building a reporting team as the channel developed. However the bulletin hardly reflected a channel, whose aspirations were to take on the like of BBC-WS and CCN-I at their own game.

In the OSC blueprint, management pointed to CCTV-9's comparative advantage over foreign broadcasters in reporting the 'China story.' But CCTV-9 did not take

advantage of this comparative advantage to the degree one might have expected. On the one hand, because CCTV-9's parent, CCTV, had its own correspondents in major cities and relationships with broadcasters around the PRC on which it could draw for news, CCTV-9 was able to cover the whole of the country without moving from Beijing. On the other hand, as the channel became more sophisticated in its coverage and self cover developed as an important source of news, CCTV-9 failed to expand its domestic news net and develop relationships with broadcasters, who might have supplied stories independently of CCTV's Chinese-language network of correspondents.

Senior management explained to me that the general shortage of English-speaking Chinese reporters outside Beijing was the primary problem. What management could not explain was that if this was the problem, why CCTV-9 did not seek to place its own reporters in at least two or three of the country's major cities on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. Despite plans to expand coverage with the May 2004 relaunch, the immediate effect of the relaunch was for the news 'net' to shrink as Shanghai TV, which had been supplying a daily bloc of Shanghai-centric information, withdrew its services (see p. 208). A reporter or stringer in for example major cities or industrial hubs such Guangzhou, Chengdu or Shanghai at the very least would have vastly expanded the possibilities for self cover from cities and surrounding regions other than Beijing.

That management was seriously contemplating at least the attempt to expand the news net was evident from a trip a manager took to seek out partners inside the PRC. But none were found. As a result, CCTV-9 carried on with its traditional reliance on CCTV's Chinese-language news sources, and the relaunch failed to deliver a bulletin that moved towards shedding its dependence on third party sources for the news.

As for CCTV-9's heavy reliance on the international news agencies, if the viewer was denied much in the way of news about the PRC that was not supplied by CCTV's

Chinese-languages services, outside of the country the opposite was the case. CCTV had fourteen overseas correspondents in 2004 (ABU, 2004), more than any of the US networks at the time.<sup>168</sup> Moreover, many of those foreign correspondents were former CCTV-9 staff. But with three exceptions during the period of participant observation, they did next to nothing for CCTV-9.

This time senior management explained that the foreign correspondents were too busy supplying the Chinese-language news. However, other staff suggested that overseas posting were seen as a 'junket'<sup>169</sup> and that once a correspondent went abroad he or she was concerned to not work for nothing, as CCTV's overseas correspondents were under no contractual obligation to service CCTV-9. Despite this, the Sydney, Hong Kong<sup>170</sup> and London based correspondents occasionally found time to do a story for CCTV-9, usually when requested, but in the case of the Sydney correspondent, of his own initiative. Nevertheless, without a contractual obligation, CCTV-9 benefited little from CCTV's impressive overseas network of bureaus. Almost all of the channel's news from abroad was supplied by APTN or Reuters.

## **Summary**

The CCTV News bulletin was primarily filler if repeat stories are counted as filler. Accepting that this is not a valid move, given the rolling character of the CCTV News, what analysis of the bulletin rundowns shows is that the news had not shed its dependence on third party sources, including inside the PRC.

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<sup>168</sup> In 2005, both CBS and NBC had eleven foreign bureaux. In 2004, ABC had six (PEJ, 2006).

<sup>169</sup> In television news parlance, a junket is an assignment that is more of a holiday than work.

<sup>170</sup> Hong Kong was considered an 'overseas' postings by CCTV.

## **THE SCRIPTS**

In order to understand how CCTV-9 used news sources and how they shaped the bulletin, I now look at the scripts. In the following discussion, I limit myself to story orientation (whether it was a domestic, foreign policy or foreign story), what places were in the news, who was spoken about (both people and institutions), and who spoke. As noted (see p. 177), the sample of news coded was the scripts from the 1200 News, pre- and post-relaunch. The aim of the analysis is not to infer what the news might have meant to an audience. Rather, I want to show how the choices available to news makers shaped the news.

### **Orientation**

Orientation has a particular relevance for news in the context of CCTV-9's role in the PRC's 'wai xuan' system. Domestic and foreign policy stories were required to reflect the Party's and government's point of view, or at least not contradict the Party's and Government's point of view. As the CCTV-9 Controller noted ahead of the May 2004 relaunch, "We are taking great efforts to minimise the tone of propaganda, to balance our reports, and to be objective. But we definitely won't be reporting as much negative domestic news as the western media" (Cui, 2004).

As for foreign news, the OSC blueprint called for CCTV-9 post-relaunch to also look at the wider world from a Chinese perspective. In its public pronouncements, management at the channel was concerned to repeat this claim. In April 2004, the Controller stated that one goal of CCTV-9 was "to voice a Chinese perspective on world affairs and to break the western voice's monopoly on the news. Our opinions on the world are quite different from those of CNN and the BBC" (Cui, 2004).

Despite this claim, what observation of the news writing process showed was that the norm at the channel was, like at CNN and the BBC (see below), to use Reuters and

APTN material as it was delivered, unless told otherwise. In short, management's claim that CCTV-9 provided Chinese perspective on world events was not supported, unless a story involved Chinese interests. This observation reflects Chang & Chen's (1998) finding a decade earlier that conformity to the 'Party line' in news in the PRC was distinctly different depending on the relationship of the story to PRC interests and that "systematic typification" in the manner in which Galtung and Ruge (Galtung & Ruge, 1965, cited in Chang, Tsan-Kuo, & Chen, Yanru, 1998) used the term characterized foreign news at CCTV-9. I have addressed elsewhere this and the conundrum news makers at CCTV-9 faced in their reliance on the agencies:

How do you feel about using so much agency video?

I don't think it is a good thing. I don't like it. But you have no choice. You have to use it. I'm not saying I don't like agency video. I think it's great. I think they make every effort to get excellent shots. I just want some news from other parts of the world. (Jirik, 2004, p. 138)

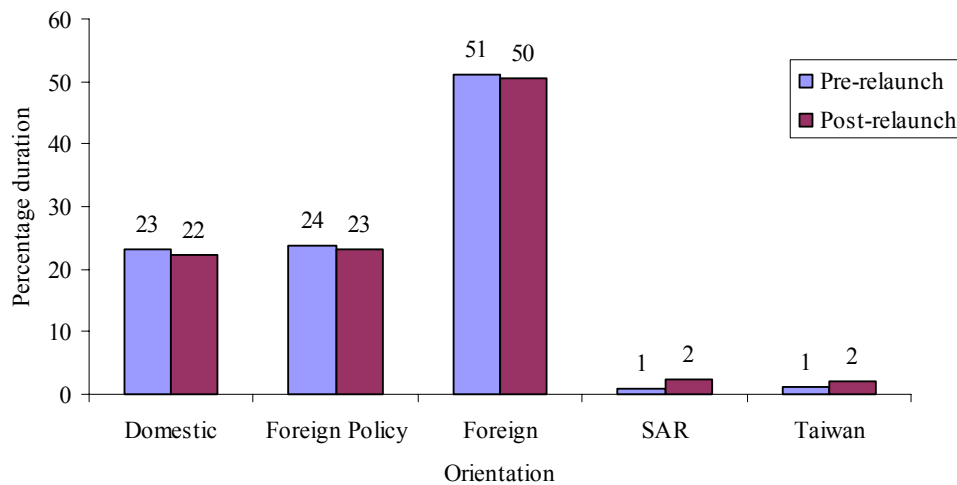
When agency material did touch on a foreign story that had a PRC angle – such as the current Darfur situation in Sudan, where Beijing is perceived to exert influence through its support for the Sudanese government and business interests, primarily oil, in the region – management would remind writers to rework agency material or discard it in favor of a source such as CCTV-1 or *Xinhua* to ensure the news reflected Beijing's position on the issue. On occasion, such as the Beslan incident already discussed (see p. 280), SARFT or the CPD would issue an interim suspension or ban on reporting a foreign story although it had no obvious PRC angle.

For the most part reliance on APTN and Reuters as story source materials was little different at CCTV-9 as it is at any broadcaster or international news channel, including CNN-I and the BBC-WS, which rely heavily on agency material to cover gaps

in their news nets, even if they rework those stories to include elements of self cover, or include agency elements in a story that is by-lined with a broadcaster's sign-off.<sup>171</sup>

Figure 15 shows story orientation on CCTV-9. Figure 16 is a mirror of Figure 15 but with sources factored in. Bracketing the potential problem with 'unknown' sources, the data indicated a strong correlation between source and story orientation both pre- and

Figure 15: Distribution of stories by orientation



post-relaunch. On domestic and foreign policy stories, CCTV-9 relied almost exclusively

<sup>171</sup> Personal experience from working at NBC and Reuters. To what extent the agencies set the agenda at broadcasters is debatable. In contrast to the situation at CCTV-9, Clausen (2003) describes a culture of re-working agency material at NHK, Japan's public service broadcaster. However, as Boyd-Barrett (1980; 1998) has argued, dependency on the international news agencies goes beyond the manner in which their materials are used to issues about the role of the agency wires in setting the agenda for broadcast news editors. The relationships between broadcasters and agencies also change in line with economic and editorial imperatives. In August 2007, CNN announced it was dropping Reuters to focus on developing its own content. But it retained AP and APTN (Kaplan, 2007). During my time at Reuters, I felt both agencies were so similar that I could not understand why any broadcaster would take both (Reuters Asia monitored APTN's output from the former's regional base in Singapore, where I was part of Reuters' television team from 1997-1999). Even in so competitive a commercialized television environments as the United States, the networks tend to subscribe to only one of the agencies at any given time.



on Self Cover and CCTV, although in foreign policy stories, some use is made of agency material. In foreign stories, agency coverage was the norm.<sup>172</sup>

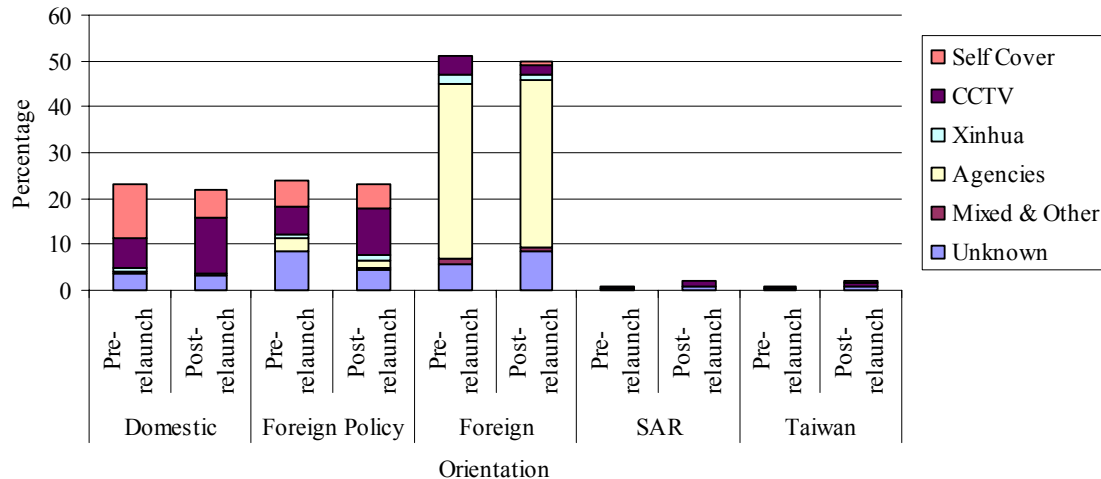
Again, the continuity of the bulletin pre- and post-relaunch is evident in the comparison, not only of the ratio of stories by orientation, but also in the source of those stories. From the limited range of sources on which CCTV-9 was able to draw for its stories, one can understand how editorial oversight was institutionalized in the production process. On domestic and foreign policy stories, the use of CCTV stories from Chinese-language channels such as CCTV-1 and CCTV-4 shored up the Party line.<sup>173</sup> Strict oversight on those stories was required only when the agencies were used. On the foreign story, so long as PRC interests were not at stake, the use of agency material was not an issue, producing “systematic typification” (Chang & Chen, 2000). The system was extremely efficient, producing news that would satisfy the regulatory and censorial authorities, with a minimum of editorial oversight.

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<sup>172</sup> One problem with this correlation is that the agencies were restricted in their coverage of the PRC and relied heavily on purchasing material from sources such as CCTV for their global subscriber base. So PRC had little incentive to use agency stories on domestic stories. Moreover, the agencies tended to focus on negative stories within the PRC, whereas CCTV-9 was concerned to put a positive spin on the story.

<sup>173</sup> CCTV-1 guaranteed the Party line. Its news was carefully monitored. However, as the incident with the Beslan ticker suggested (see p. 275), CCTV-4 had a degree of editorial autonomy that meant its work could not be guaranteed to deliver the Party line, although CCTV-9 staff considered it a reliable source.

Figure 16: Distribution of stories by orientation with proportion of sources

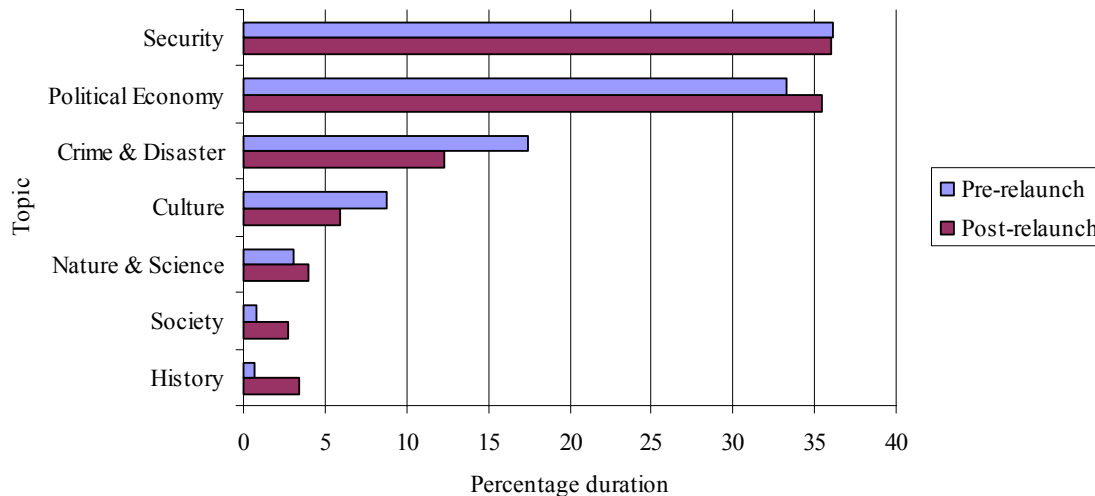


## Topic

Given the heavy reliance of CCTV's Chinese-language sources for domestic and foreign policy news and "systematic typification" in the foreign news, one would expect topic, the sense of what a story is about, to reflect the sources on which the news was based, given the conveyor belt character of the production process in so far as the writers were concerned. From observation as I have already noted in previous chapters, on the domestic and foreign policy story writers had almost no autonomy in the production process, translating Chinese-language scripts and re-editing from the video associated with those scripts. On the foreign story, they worked almost exclusively from the video and scripts Reuters and APTN supplied, rarely supplementing the original footage and narrative with supplementary materials. In other words, CCTV-1 (the primary source of Chinese language stories) was setting the news agenda for domestic and foreign policy news on CCTV-9. And the international news agencies were setting the agenda in foreign news.

Figure 17 shows the distribution of topics on the CCTV-9 1200 News. Clearly the bulletin was extremely ‘hard’,<sup>174</sup> with security issues (military & state security, WMD,

Figure 17: Distribution of topics, pre- & post-relaunch, 1200 News



terrorism, war, conflict, etc.) and political economy<sup>175</sup> dominating the bulletin. Moreover, CCTV-9 did not shy away from disasters and crime, which together with security and political economy accounted for most of the news. Using my own ‘sense’ of how a news producer would look at the topic categories, I derived indices to measure ‘hardness’ and ‘softness’ according to the distribution of categories shown in Table 13. The proportion

<sup>174</sup> Hardness is an intuitive measure developed through internalization of the norms of news making that news makers use to describe one dimension of the qualities they attribute to a story. When I worked as a television news producer, terms like ‘softie’ were thrown around the newsroom to distinguish a story from hard news, which was rarely referred to as such, since hard stories were the norm and therefore treated as ‘the news’. When Reuters’ producers put together bulletins for wholesale distribution, we were always concerned to include in the mix, if possible, cultural stories, sports, ‘funnies,’ etc., the type of news that runs towards the bottom of a bulletin.

<sup>175</sup> The combination of politics and economics into a single category, political economy, concealed what appeared to be a significant shift from politically to economically oriented stories post-relaunch. Post-relaunch, politically oriented stories decreased eight percent from twenty-five to seventeen percent, while economically oriented stories increased from nine to nineteen percent. I had no ready explanation for this shift.

of hardness to softness in the news is shown in Figure 18. As has been the case elsewhere to this point, continuity characterized the news pre- and post-relaunch in terms of both

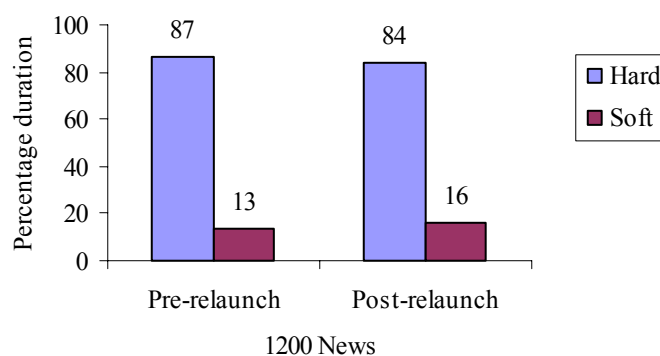
Hard categories	Soft categories
Crime & Disaster	Culture
Political Economy	History
Security	Nature & Science
	Society

Table 13: Distribution of categories into hard & soft news, 1200 News

topics and the proportion of hard to soft stories.

Given the ‘wai xuan’ function of the CCTV-9 news, one might expect domestic and foreign policy news to be somewhat ‘softer’ than foreign news, but not so soft as to be an evident whitewash of events inside the PRC. Although a subtle difference is

Figure 18: Proportion of hardness to softness, pre- & post relaunch, 1200 News

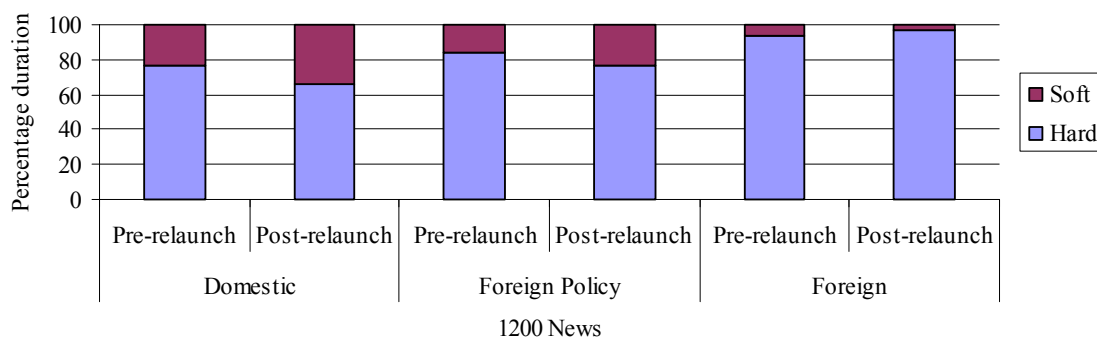


evident (see Figure 19) in the orientation of the 1200 News depending on its orientation, with a nice symmetry as the orientation shifts from domestic through foreign policy to

foreign news, only comparative analysis with bulletins from other news systems would indicate whether the CCTV-9 news is any kinder to the PRC than for example ABC, CBS or NBC might be to the United States.

“Systematic typification” has shown that news systems portray the domestic scene in a more homely fashion, while seeing foreign stories through frames that exoticize the ‘other’ and portray foreign countries in terms of governing elites, security issues, coups and earthquakes (Thussu, 1996, p. 80). Although the critique developed by Galtung & Ruge (1965) was originally designed to show how the developed world portrayed the developing world, CCTV-9 would seem to apply a similar inside to outside defamiliarization of the ‘other’ that one would expect in US news. Moreover, despite the relative ‘hardness’ of the foreign news on CCTV-9, the evidence of the 1200 News also suggests that CCTV-9 does take a ‘hard’ look at the PRC as well, despite the system of regulatory and censorial controls. Although observation and management statements made clear that the news could not criticize the government, as noted in the discussion of the reporters’ work, indirect criticism is leveled at the government through the focus on issues such as disease and disasters.

Figure 19: Proportion of hardness to softness by orientation, 1200 News



In light of the above discussion, evident from Figure 19 is one interesting trend, a noticeable softening of domestic and foreign policy news pre- and post-relaunch. Given the frustration of some of my interlocutors on the issue of increasing regulatory and censorial pressure after the relaunch (see p. 94), and the ambiguity of the demands in the OSC blueprint that the channel be both an international news channel while emphasizing the official point of view in stories (see p. 241), then this evident softening might be an indicator that SARFT and the CPD were increasingly active post-relaunch in influencing the editorial process. Perhaps the regulators and censors have begun to crack down at CCTV-9 on the kind of indirect criticism of the government in PRC media which a range of writers have commented on (Pan, 2000, 2005; Tong, 2007), and which I noted in Hu Jintao's May 2005 declaration of 'smokeless war' on 'liberal elements' (p. 94). But as I have been arguing throughout this dissertation, pressure from external agencies and institutions on the news making process is likely to be reconfigured and redirected in the tactics of resistance that also characterize news making in the PRC.

## **Place**

Given the orientation of the news, distribution of topics, reliance on CCTV's Mandarin-language sources in domestic and foreign policy news and international news agencies in foreign news, one would expect "systematic typification" to also characterize places in the news, although "typification" here needs to be thought through Beijing as the center. Using the coding categories of city, province (state) and country in the news, I constructed an index of regions in the news according to my experience at Reuters of how a news producer internalizes a geography of international relations that distributes cities, provinces and countries according to political economic and cultural divisions that

function as a rule of thumb for news making.<sup>176</sup> The regions were as follows: Africa, Central America, Latin America, North America, Asia (other), Central Asia, Northeast Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, China (PRC & Taiwan), Middle East, Europe, Oceania, Russia, Other (in space, at sea, etc.).

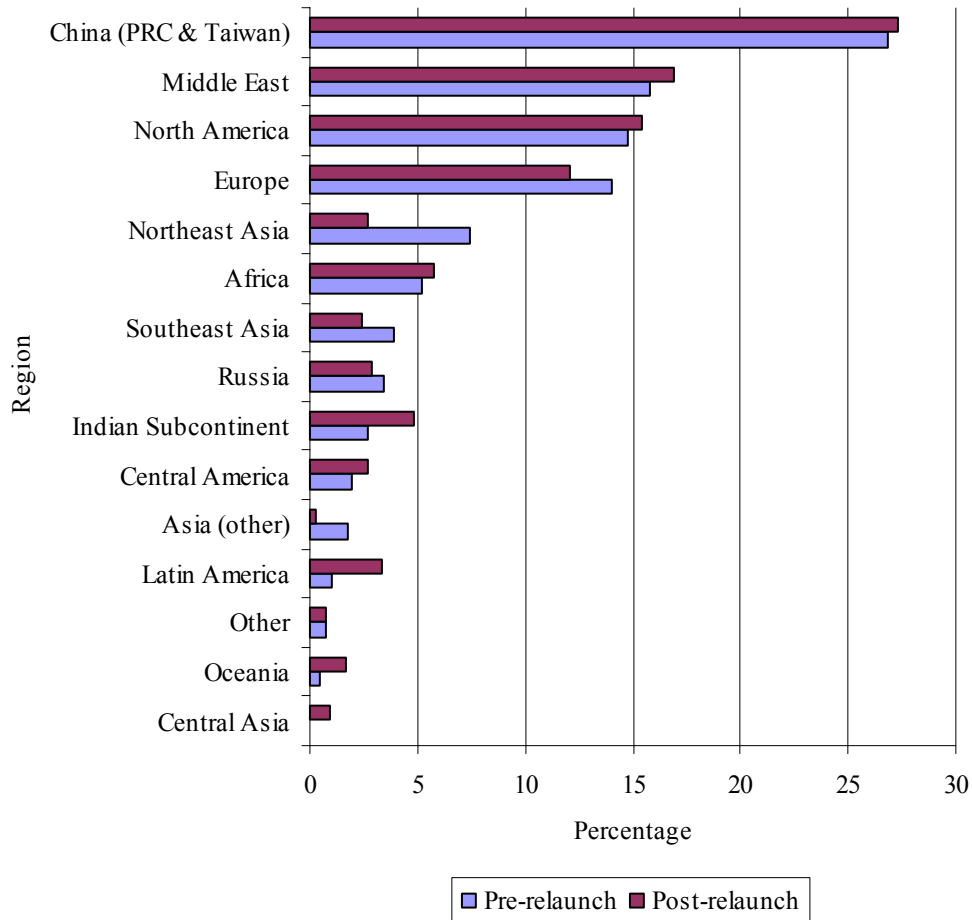
Clearly no single definition accounts for this delineation. Russia for example functions as an anomaly in the global news system, not quite part of Asia, not quite part of Europe, although it spans both Asia and Europe. The category of other included the continent of Antarctica, the Arctic, space and locations at sea. To make clear what countries (including by definition provinces (states) and cities) were associated with which regions, I have included a complete breakdown of countries (entities) in the news by region in Appendix 16 (p. 619). Counting each region once per story for any mention of a city, province (state) or country associated with a region in a story, regardless of the number of mentions per story, Figure 20 shows the distribution of regions in the news.

As is to be expected, China dominated the news. The predominance of the Middle East is in part explained by the US (and its allies) wars against Iraq and Afghanistan (treated as part of the Middle East here, given that the two wars are the common thread). Similarly, North America is highly visible since it has been counted for every mention of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nevertheless, despite “systematic typification” certain regularities point to PRC interests in particular parts of the world. For example, the predominance of Northeast Asia pre-relaunch was associated with Beijing-sponsored ‘six-party’ talks on the Democratic Republic of Korea’s nuclear program. Russia’s prominence in the news indicates Beijing’s particular concern to develop good relations, especially in the context of a potential ally in the region on issues that Beijing and

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<sup>176</sup> I used the CIA World Factbook as a starting point for developing the index of regions (see Appendix 16, p. 619).

Figure 20: Regions in the news, 1200 News

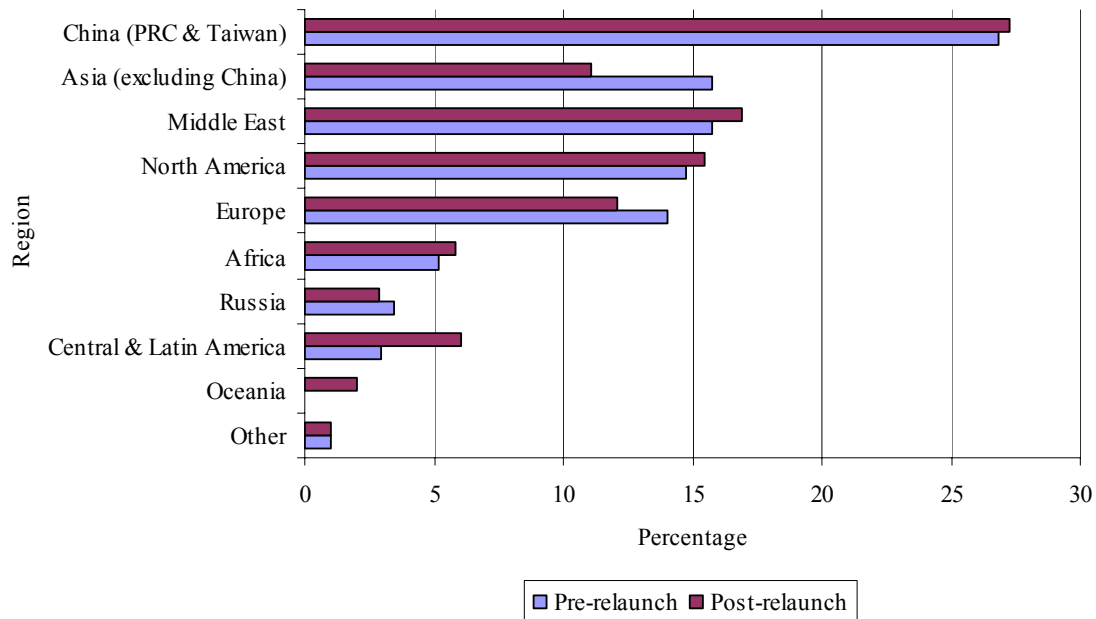


Moscow share common ground on in opposition to Europe and the United States. Given the heavy reliance on the international news agencies in foreign news, not surprisingly the developing world outside of Asia, i.e. Africa and Latin America, play a minor role in the CCTV News.

Nevertheless, if the sub-regions shown in Figure 20 are collapsed to give regions as a whole, a somewhat different picture emerges. In Figure 21 Asia, excluding China, is presented as a single region and Central and Latin America are combined, giving more of



Figure 21: Regions in the news, with sub-regions combined into full regions



a sense of a Beijing-centric bulletin with a strong flavor of Asia. At the same time, the wars in the Middle East and the developed world remain highly visible. In short, CCTV-9 positions the PRC at the center of an Asian sphere of influence and focuses on the developed world (the United States and Europe), both its successes and failures, to the exclusion of much of the rest of the world. The relative visibility of Africa despite the expectations of “systematic typification” most likely indicate Africa’s increasing interest to the PRC as a source of raw materials and destination for aid and investment. For the most part though, the bulletin presented an image of the world heavily skewed to the developed world and its overseas interests in the Middle East.

This is perhaps not the world one would expect from a news service that claims to provide a different picture of the world to that available on video retailers such as the BBC-WS and CNN-I. Rather it is a picture of Beijing as one center sharing center stage

with other centers in the United States and Europe. Whether a different picture would have emerged had CCTV-9 not relied almost exclusively on the international news agencies for its foreign news is a moot point. But what is clear is that allowing for a Beijing-centered bulletin, the CCTV-9 news did not offer Chinese perspective and that as a window on the world, it differed little from its competitors in the likes of BBC-WS and CNN-I. Not surprisingly and especially given the dependence of CCTV-9 on the international news agencies for foreign stories, the developing world was of lesser consequence in the news.

Comparing the stories pre- and post-relaunch, again the general emphasis of the news does not vary, although particular regions are more or less in the news over time as the story shifts. However, the flexibility of the news in this sense takes place within a broader framework that privileges Asia and the developed world to the exclusion of the developing world outside Asia. The spike in news from Central and Latin America post-relaunch does not seem to have a ready explanation. No senior PRC leader visited during the time. The stories associated with the region were primarily of regional interest and focused on security and disasters. I would expect that longer term that spike would dissolve.

Inside the PRC, the Beijing-centric character of the news is just as pronounced. Figure 22 shows the distribution of the PRC's major administrative units (provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and special administrative regions) in the news.<sup>177</sup> The distribution of places in the news pre- and post-relaunch is discernibly similar.

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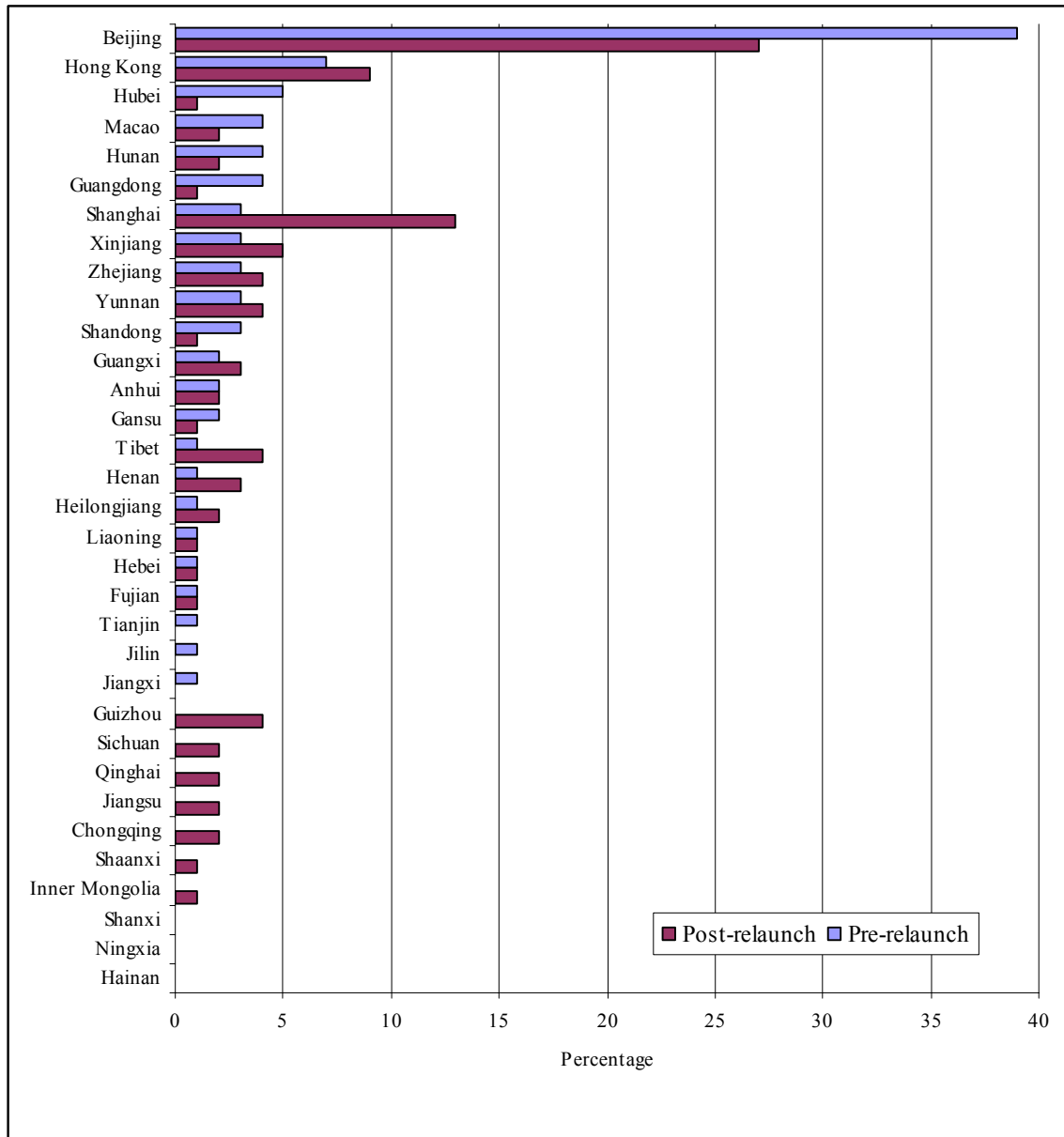
<sup>177</sup> For the sake of simplifying analysis, I have treated as equivalent the PRC administrative units which are roughly equivalent to a state in the United States. The PRC consists of twenty-two provinces, five autonomous regions, four municipalities directly under the Central Government, and the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macao. The twenty-two provinces are Anhui, Fujian, Gansu, Guangdong, Guizhou, Hainan, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Jilin, Liaoning, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Zhejiang; the five autonomous regions

The only obvious change is in the greater visibility of Shanghai in the news post-relaunch. Pre-relaunch, Shanghai TV had supplied a daily bloc of news to CCTV-9 that aired during prime time. Post-relaunch, CCTV-9 dropped the bloc of news from Shanghai. The most likely explanation for the increase in news Shanghai post-relaunch was the need to include Shanghai in the CCTV News, given that the bloc of news about the city was no longer available. The increase in news from Shanghai post-relaunch in the news was matched by a drop in news from Beijing. Even so, Beijing remained the focus of the news.

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are Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Xinjiang and Tibet; the four municipalities are Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai and Tianjin.

Figure 22: PRC major administrative units in the news, 1200 News

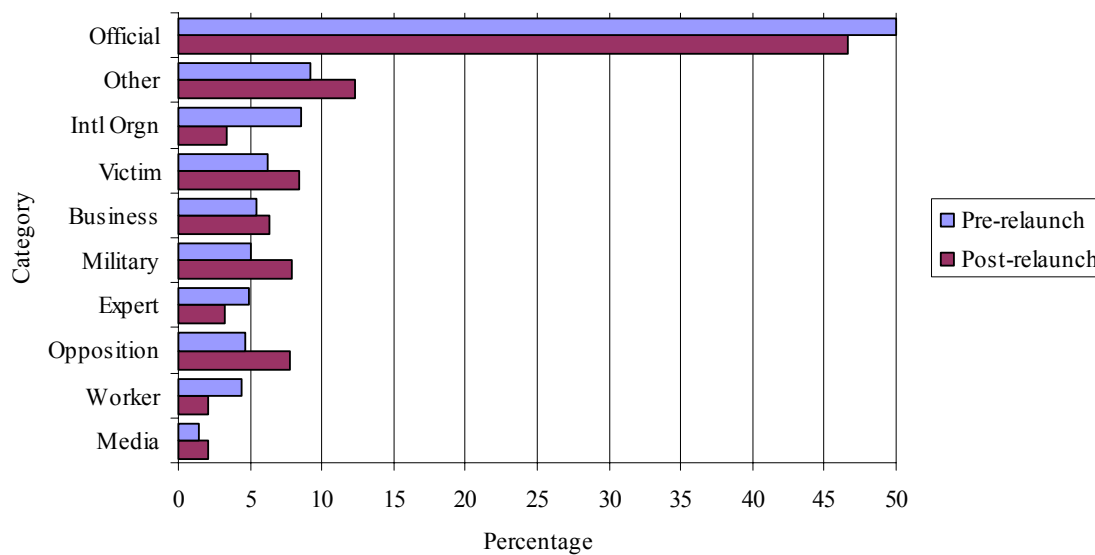


Accepting that Beijing should predominate in news that is the voice of the Party and Central Government, the asymmetry in place in the news is striking nevertheless. Given that the PRC is home to 1.3 billion people, three major and mutually unintelligible

dialects (Mandarin, Shanghai dialect and Cantonese) and a myriad cultures and lesser dialects (many of them also mutually unintelligible), and given that the economic powerhouses that have driven the PRC's development in recent decades are situated primarily in Guangdong Province, the Yangtze River basin, especially in and around Shanghai, on the eastern seaboard, and in many large cities and towns inland, the CCTV News was a pale reflection of the country as a whole. The location of the reporters' team exclusively in Beijing only accentuated this imbalance, as reporters' stories also had a predominantly Beijing focus.

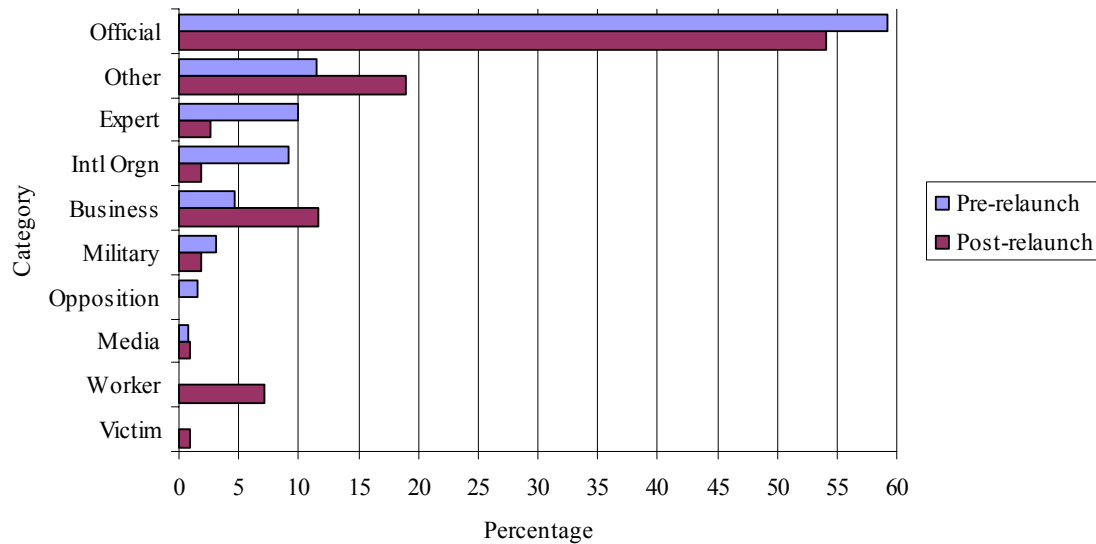
### **Persons & institutions in the news**

Figure 23: Persons & institutions referred to in the news, 1200 News



The focus on Beijing and the 'hardness' of the news in general is reflected in the persons and institutions in the news. Official persons and institutions dominate. Figure 23 shows the distribution of categories of person and institution referred to for all three news

Figure 24: Who speaks in the news, 1200 News



orientations: domestic, foreign policy and foreign. Figure 24 shows who speaks for the same categories.

## DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

### Discussion

The function of this chapter has been to triangulate the observation based data. The argument I have been making in this dissertation is that a case study of CCTV-9 during the period of its relaunch as a rolling news service in May 2004 reveals that little changed as a result of the relaunch, although a cosmetic makeover of sets and on air graphics allowed management to make the case for more change than what I observed as part of the team that designed the relaunch. The survey of content presented in this chapter confirms that observation.

The symmetry pre- and post-relaunch evident in this chapter in much of the news would have been striking in light of the claims of change, were it not evident from

observation that management had been in no position to make the changes suggested in the OSC blueprint. On the one hand, the external agencies such as *Xinhua* and *China Radio International* with whom CCTV-9 had hoped to forge a closer working relationship in line with SARFT's demands to that effect, declined to play the role envisaged for them in the OSC blueprint. On the other hand, internal opposition to the relaunch prevented any substantive changes to either the editorial structure of the channel or its production practices. As a result, the survey of content presented above confirms what I observed, that continuity rather than change characterized the development of CCTV-9 pre- and post-relaunch.

A second thread that I have been weaving through this dissertation has been the highly structured character of the conveyor-belt driven news making process. In this CCTV-9 differed little from other international broadcasters such as BBC-WS and CNN-I, which CCTV-9 sought to emulate. Nevertheless, some particularities of news making at CCTV-9 are worth noting.

Firstly, the heavy reliance on the international news agencies for foreign news, despite CCTV large and expanding network of overseas bureaus, undermined management's claim that CCTV-9 offered a different perspective on the world than did its global competitors. What this chapter coupled with observation of how agency material was handled shows is that the foreign news agenda at CCTV-9 was set by Reuters and APTN, since CCTV-9 effectively had no incentive to access foreign news other than that supplied by the agencies on their 24-hour feeds. Despite a plethora of in-house agreements with broadcasters around the world, and membership of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, CCTV-9 relied almost exclusively on the two international news agencies for its foreign news. The situation was not surprising, especially in the

absence of an Assignment Desk that could have handled the requests for coverage outside of that provided by the agencies.

Secondly, and as a direct corollary of the role of the agencies in news making at CCTV-9, the claim that CCTV International would be a “window on the world” and not simply a “window on China” seems to be a defensible claim, only defensible in a manner other than that which management intended. Compared to the viewer of network news in the United States for example, the viewer of CCTV-9 would seem to be presented with a broader and richer picture of the world than is available domestically in the United States.

For example, research done in the United States at about the same time I was collecting data for this dissertation concluded that ABC, CBS, and NBC, offered “mere dribblets of international news” (Anon., 2005c). Although the methodology used in that study prevents direct comparison with my findings here, the fact that about fifty percent of the CCTV News pre- and post-relaunch was foreign news suggests that a comparison using the same methodology would show that compared to US audiences, domestic audiences of CCTV-9 were offered a surfeit of foreign news. As for CCTV-9’s global audience, again given the dependency on the international news agencies for foreign news, I have no reason not to suggest that CCTV-9 presented a picture of the world outside China that was any different than that available on channels such as BBC-WS and CNN-I.

Thirdly, the claim that CCTV-9 was a “window on China” is problematic. The survey of content showed such a restricted range of places, voices and institutions in the news that I can only conclude that CCTV-9 offered not so much a window on China, as a window on Beijing. Nevertheless, without comparative analysis with its global competitors, I have no reason to think that CCTV-9’s coverage of the PRC was any less attenuated than that of its competitors, or that its coverage of the PRC was any worse (or



better) than that of CNN of the United States or the BBC of the UK. Decades of media research have consistently shown that official voices and institutions of power (political, military, economic and judiciary) dominate news in public service and commercial television news in the United States and the United Kingdom. So the assumption that the mouthpiece function CCTV-9 plays within the PRC's 'wai xuan' system should not be automatically translated into distrust of the CCTV-9 News, unless one is willing to subject other news systems to a similar critique. What is needed is comparative analysis of different media systems globally, taking as its starting point not the ideology of the political economy in which each media system is embedded, nor the regulatory framework that enables and constrains news making, but content and the manner in which particular stories are handled.

I am not suggesting here that CCTV-9 cannot be improved. On the contrary, I believe radical improvement is required if CCTV-9 is to achieve its goal "to make CCTV-9 in a real sense an international news channel" (see p. 88). But I also believe radical improvement is needed in commercial and public service systems if they are to escape the charge made by the likes of Herman & Chomsky (1988), McChesney (1999) and Schiller (1992) that they serve as mouthpieces for power despite revenue and regulatory structures that formally guarantee such systems editorial autonomy from political control.

Finally, what this chapter suggests is that CCTV-9 has failed to provide the support for its reporters that, in my opinion, will play an important role in determining in the long term whether the channel succeeds in breaking out of the trend of its evolution as a translation service for third party sources. News makers at CCTV-9 have mastered the formulaic procedures associated with news making in general, and in this specific instance with turning material from the agencies and CCTV's Mandarin language

channels into news. But without an editorial system that empowers the zhubians as masters of the bulletin, without a desk that controls the news rather than the news making machine being in control of the news makers, who merely tinker with it, and without an expanded domestic and international network of reporters and stringers that shifts the channel more towards producing its own news, which will brand the channel's identity, CCTV-9 will continue to function for the most part as a Beijing-centric barometer of local developments and a fairly reliable indicator of what the Party and government want to say about China at any given time and want the world to see.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I have surveyed content. The survey consisted of an analysis of two sets of data, a set of rundowns for two bulletins, the 1200 and 2400 News, and an analysis of the scripts associated with the 1200 News. The aim of the chapter was to provide empirical evidence of the outcomes of the production process, and relate those outcomes as content back to the production process. As triangulation, the survey of content supported the evidence presented from other data sources in previous chapters.

The analysis of rundowns showed a high degree of symmetry between the bulletins pre- and post-relaunch. The analysis of scripts indicated that the news remains a translation service for third party sources characterized by “systematic typification” and a focus on power centers and official voices. No significant change in content was evident in the bulletins pre- and post-relaunch, suggesting little support for management claims that the relaunch ushered in a new era at CCTV-9 with the introduction of a rolling news service and shift in focus away from being “window on China,” to becoming a “window on China and the world.”

## **Chapter 12: Conclusion**

The picture of the news presented in the previous chapter contrasted sharply with the work of the reporters' group analyzed in Chapter 10. In content a picture of the close relationship between source material and stories emerged that largely reduced CCTV-9 to the images available from third party sources. Despite the concern for their work that characterized the attitude of the reporters' group, their sense of commitment to making news that branded CCTV-9 with an identifiable image was lost in the dependency on third party sources that characterized the bulletin.

The tension between those two types of news making was as evident in the production process as it was in content. The failure of the May 2004 relaunch to change the news in any significant way was mirrored in the failure to develop an editorial system based on an empowered Assignment Desk that might have boosted the agency of news makers, and ipso facto that of the reporters' group, against the existing system of servicing a news making machine that was powered by third party sources. In this concluding chapter, I analyze that tension in terms of the significance of my findings for the literature about globalization, the history of television, the habitus of the journalist and theories of journalism that were surveyed in the pre-data chapters. Finally I offer a tentative theory of possible futures for CCTV-9. But first I summarize the data-driven grounds of the analysis which led to the theory.

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

#### **The relaunch**

Chapter 7: The relaunch found that rather than a radical transformation of the channel, the May 3, 2004 relaunch focused on mise-en-scene and that the revamped

channel bore little resemblance to the OSC blueprint. However, my analysis suggested that rather than a failure to carry out instructions ‘from above,’ management successfully reconfigured the discourse on the relaunch, winning SARFT’s praise for the outcome, while retaining the existing channel in an almost unchanged form. Using Pan & Lu’s (2003) and Pan’s (2005) deployment of Certeau (1984) and Bourdieu’s (2005a) concept of field, I showed how management reconfigured the discourse on change to present the status quo as a transformation.

Paradoxically resistance to change empowered the news making process in a situation where the demands for change and their emphasis on publicity within the news making system conflicted with the professional priorities of the news makers. The success of the latter in resisting change showed how much agency news makers have in negotiating change, even when the field in which they work is embedded in political economic, regulatory and censorial contexts that much of the literature treats as first and final determinants in media reform. Against any easy assumption about the prerogatives of the Party/State, the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International showed how much latitude media managers have in interpreting instructions and implementing reform. On display also were the tactics with which the weaker party confronted the power structure in an uneven but definitely not one-sided struggle.

In terms of the first research question – How do media institutions such as CCTV negotiate their overall relationship with the Party and government? – the process of the CCTV-9 relaunch clearly showed that media have a great deal of agency in implementing reform and that power is negotiated and cannot be assumed in the PRC. That conclusion was reinforced in Chapters 8, 9 and 10 which addressed the second broad research question: How did news makers at CCTV-9 negotiate control over news making in their day to day work?

## **Editorial**

Chapter 8: Editorial showed how external control played out at CCTV-9, especially in the context of the channel's role in the PRC's 'wai xuan' system. Despite CCTV-9's imbrication in a top-down hierarchy of editorial control that originated in the Politburo, channel management and news makers from the Controller down had much of the final say in what went to air. Socialization into the norms of news production was functional to the normalization of self-censorship that ensured reproduction of the Party line in the news, without intervention from the Party or the government. CCTV-9 worked on a loosely held but unbreakable leash, rarely straying into territory that would cause problems with the CPD or SARFT.

The evacuation of the censorial and regulatory authorities from much of the day-to-day news making process meant also that hegemony rather than coercion characterized reproduction of the Party line in news production. Consent to domination was an unwritten contract that bound news makers to their jobs. However, this contract was also a license that empowered journalists to push against those bonds. As a result, the news making process was open to forms of resistance that were largely invisible to external agencies of censorship and regulation that sought to shape the story. In particular refusal as evident in the example of CCTV-9 limiting its coverage of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Deng Xiaoping to enough not to draw attention to its lack of coverage was an outstanding but not atypical example of unremarkable work that had subversive potential.

## **Production**

The quotidian news making process as a form of resistance internal to the channel was evident in the highly structured and efficient new production system, especially its reliance on the use of third party source materials. The very lack of control news makers had over the news meant that whatever control the censorial and regulatory authorities

had over news makers could not easily be translated into control of content. The downside of the lack of control news makers had over the news was that a re-active rather than pro-active news editing system operated at CCTV-9. Although breaking stories were only a small part of output, the channel's failure on the tsunami story exposed a serious flaw in the news editing system that management said it was concerned to fix. However failure to establish a desking system hampered management's attempts at change. My attempts and those of senior management to build a better relationship with external agencies such as Reuters also failed. The entrenched news making culture and the momentum that the channel had developed out of its launch as a 24-hour comprehensive service in September 2000 was not changed with the May 2004 relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International as a rolling news channel.

### **Reporters**

If any one area of the work at CCTV-9 should be singled out for emphasis in the relaunch and as an example of the negotiation of control, it was the work of the reporters' group, given management's insistence on their work as a model, typified by the series 'China's Challenges,' and AIDS Report for development of the channel. Moreover, the best of their work as shown in the stories about HIV/AIDS showed how the reporters had developed a discourse on professionalism that shifted the balance between balance and objectivity in news making and the Party line more towards the former. This was true, even if tactics deployed in resistance to their mouthpiece function ensured that while the Party line was muted, it was not silenced, undermining any easy way for the censorial and regulatory authorities to identify and act against resistance to the dominant hegemony in the news making process.

Production of the HIV/AIDS series was a paradigm example of Pan's (2000) and Pan & Lu's (2003) account of the manner in which reporters evade the strategies of the CPD and SARFT and appropriate the dominant discourse, in this case on professionalism, to tell a different story. Despite the concerns of senior management, the reporter changed only enough in the stories to get them to air. On display in the manner in which the HIV/AIDS story was handled was the long history of journalism in the PRC: social responsibility and the demand – embedded in what I have tentatively called a 'Confucian habitus' – to speak truth to power, even at great personal risk, reflecting the complex calculation of possibilities as to exactly where the limit to any particular story could be found that the best of the reporters exercised in their everyday work.

Evident in both China's Challenges and AIDS Report was the core news value, social responsibility, which distinguishes journalism in the PRC from mainstream media in commercialized media systems in countries such as the United States. Beyond a concern for balance and objectivity, CCTV-9's reporters took seriously their role as advocates for change and strove to identify and inform the Party and government of problems that they believed needed to be addressed.

Nevertheless, as the survey of content showed, however effective the work of the reporters' group, it tended to be overshadowed by the overall reliance of the general news on third party sources, and the continuation of the channel as a comprehensive channel with a balance of news, features, entertainment, art and educational programming, rather than its transformation into a rolling news channel. The injunction in the OSC blueprint on anything not news related associated with the plan to relaunch CCTV-9 as a rolling news service was reconfigured in negotiation of the relaunch to ensure the opposite outcome of what originally had been intended.

## **Content**

Chapter 11: Content provided empirical evidence of the link between the first two research questions and the third: With the relaunch of CCTV-9 as CCTV International in May 2004, over time what evidence of change emerged? Content confirmed what participant observation, interviews and documents had shown: despite a huge expenditure of money, effort and time, and great changes to elements of the *mise en scene* at CCTV-9, in what the audience saw, the ‘stuff’ of television, almost nothing changed with the May 2004 relaunch.

The survey of content showed a high degree of symmetry in the bulletins pre- and post-relaunch. Scripts confirmed what observation suggested, that the CCTV-9 news remained a translation service for third party sources, resulting in “systematic typification” and a focus on power centers and official voices, despite management’s insistence on self cover as the starting point for re-branding CCTV-9 as an international news channel characterized by Chinese perspective.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS FOR THE LITERATURE**

The data that was the core of this dissertation was only the starting point for an analysis of its significance in the context of the “going out” project of which CCTV International is a core component, and the latter’s role in the PRC’s ‘*wai xuan*’ system. In order to understand the importance of the development of CCTV-9 despite my findings that the May 2004 relaunch was characterized above all by continuity rather than change one must embed that continuity in the long history of the development of media in the PRC.



## **Globalization**

What my discussion of the meaning of globalization for the PRC and its reconfiguration as a 'going out' project suggests is that to understand media reform in the PRC, PRC media must themselves, in their specificity, be if not a starting point, then a central focus of analysis. Like globalization theory itself, too much analysis of media in the PRC takes as its starting point media systems embedded in other political, economic, social and cultural contexts and proceeds by way of identification of the PRC media system as not of a type. As a result, this kind of analysis, embedded in particular in assumptions about the alleged relationship between commercialization and media freedom, suggests PRC media must be reconfigured in line with norms that have no relationship to the specific development of media in the PRC. In contrast, this dissertation has taken as its starting point the practices of news makers at CCTV-9 and shown how those practices are part of the long history of media reform in Imperial and Republican China and the PRC.

Just as reconfiguration of globalization theory to center Beijing, where appropriate, would show how much the current configuration of the global political economic and cultural economy are the result of Beijing's 'going out' project which Deng Xiaoping triggered with the 'four modernizations' in 1978, so reconfiguration of media theory with respect to the PRC should show that the current configuration of media is a continuation of a long debate over the role of media in reform in general.

That role was associated with the rise of domestic news systems as reformers and then revolutionaries appropriated Euro-centric discourses about the nation and reconfigured them to justify first defense of the empire and then its overthrow. The adoption and adaptation of this discourse on modernization was characterized by hybridization as both the condition and process of China's globalization. From a Chinese

perspective globalization involved local ideas, technologies, institutions and products that enabled the rise of the West. Centuries later these forces, taken up and reconfigured by European imperial powers, returned. China's modern globalization begins in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with the appropriation and reconfiguration of Social Darwinian ideas of history, race and the nation-state to resist Western encroachment and Japanese invasion. The civil war and communist victory in 1949 marked the end of a 100-year period that is best understood as an epistemic break in the Foucauldian sense that changed China and the Chinese to the extent that the Chinese appropriated and adapted the discourses they utilized in the long struggle to liberate the country and give birth to the nation.

What characterizes the PRC's globalization after 1978 is the intensification and expansion of economic development, strengthening of nationalist sentiment, and reconfiguration of the state, as the Party relies less on coercion and more on consent to buttress its rule. What the future holds is unclear. What is clear is that globalization has not dissolved national boundaries and political borders. Rather, in recent years the opposition between socialism and capitalism has given way to a revived nationalism and identity politics.

Rather than accounting for the PRC's reform and opening as an effect of Western-centric globalization, the PRC's globalization is better understood as a dynamic process of external impact and internal projection, both a coming in and a going out. In the cultural sphere this is characterized by the launch of a channel such as CCTV-9, which draws heavily on the international news agencies, yet represents engagement with the world on the PRC's terms, a project that has characterized the development of television in the PRC from the outset.

## **Television**

The launch of CCTV International was less an initiative than an evolution in line with the development of television within the PRC. The launch of CCTV International echoed the quest for international recognition that drove the original launch of television in 1958. The call for the transformation of CCTV-9 amounted to the continuation of the debate about the role of media in development and governance that has characterized television since its inception in the PRC.

The development of CCTV International corresponds to the historical demands put on television to serve as an instrument of the Party and government. The Party/State has called for CCTV International to become in a real sense an international news channel with Chinese perspective. Against an objectivist news ontology, which would rule out this possibility a priori, the hybrid media model developing in the PRC draws no necessary distinction between news and external publicity or ‘wai xuan.’

The commercialization of television in the PRC was sponsored by the Party/State and the Party/State has been its prime beneficiary. With the launch of CCTV International, the Party/State is seeking to extend its voice further into the international arena. However, it cannot do so without the support of program makers and in the case of television news, journalists.

## **Journalism**

The field of journalism in the PRC is rife with contradictions as the different forces that shape television – political, economic, technological, institutional and cultural – struggle for control of the space of its development. Within this space, journalism occupies a powerful niche. What the history of the development of television journalism in the PRC shows is how close the practitioners of today are to their predecessors, especially in their role as the inheritors of the intellectual vocation, an instrument of the

power structure charged with speaking truth to power. Journalists at CCTV-9 are following in the footsteps of the journalists of the late Imperial and early Republican periods as well as in the footsteps of communist media, torn between the mass line politics of Mao Zedong and the statist pragmatics of Deng Xiaoping.

From the analysis of the work of the newsroom and journalists at CCTV-9, clearly news makers balanced social responsibility and professionalism understood as serving the people with their mouthpiece function and professionalism understood as serving the Party and government. Analysts have warned against binaries and the dichotomous framing of the problem for media reform in the PRC as a false choice when presented as an either/or choice between Party/State and market. I would add that framing the role of journalism as either speaking on behalf of the power structure or speaking truth to power is equally a false choice, given that journalists are not outside power but part of the power system. Within this system they play a role both as a transmission mechanism for information and, in their role as advocates for change, as a crucial feedback mechanism for the Party and government.

#### **TOWARDS A THEORY OF NEWS IN THE PRC & THE FUTURE OF CCTV-9**

Social theory of media reform in the PRC operates primarily at the structural and institutional level of media reform. In contrast to these foci, my focus has been on media practice as a form of agency that brings pressure to bear on the contexts of its own development.

The chapters on editorial, production and the work of the reporters' group showed how Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony, understood as the process by which institutions such as the CPD and SARFT exercise control over the news making process, can usefully be strengthened by deploying Certeau's (1984) understanding of how

institutional change is negotiated through the everyday practices of social agents embedded within institutions. As a macro-level concept, hegemony provides a framework for understanding the corporate relationship developing between the Party/State and media in the PRC. As a micro-level concept, the ‘art of resistance’ showed how social agents negotiate with the power structure.

The role of management in re-negotiating the OSC blueprint for the May 2004 relaunch was a paradigm case of reconfiguring the discourse of the Party/State to ends opposite to those which the authorities originally intended. Similarly in the work of the newsroom in refusal to do certain stories and in the work of the reporters in series such as ‘China’s Challenges’ and ‘AIDS Report’, the tactics of the weak were on full display.

Nevertheless, what participant observation, interviews and Chapter 11: Content also showed was the high degree of congruency between the bulletin and the interests of the Party/State. Most of the domestic and foreign policy news was translated from sources such as CCTV-1 that guaranteed the Party line. The predominance of Beijing as the locus of the domestic news and the predominance of officials as sources of information and references in the news left little space for the kind of work associated with the reporters’ group that would push the reporting envelope.

At the same time, the foreign news was characterized by “systematic typification,” portraying the world in terms with which an international audience would be familiar. Although this not the Chinese perspective that was called for in the OSC blueprint, such an outcome hardly presented any kind of threat to the power structure. As a result, caution must be exercised in order to not overstate the level of resistance associated with the everyday practices of news making in the PRC.

If the work of Pan (2005) and Pan & Lu (2003) is groundbreaking for drawing attention to the manner in which news makers have agency in the media reform process,

their emphasis on the work of Certeau (1984) to the exclusion of what Certeau (1984) himself excludes – the structural sociology of Bourdieu (1977) and the analysis of power associated with Foucault (1977) – suggests that the structural dimension of political economic and regulatory power can be usefully reintroduced into the analysis, if Certeau's (1984) move is unwarranted.

I am not suggesting here that Certeau (1984) is wrong. Rather, I am suggesting that his critique of Bourdieu (1977) and Foucault (1977) which focuses on the concepts of habitus and surveillance relies on a correlation between the arts of resistance as practiced by those alienated from the prevailing power system and the minutiae of everyday life associated with acts that escape the discursive frameworks that legitimize and are recursively legitimized by sociology and the power structure. However, unlike Certeau's (1984) examples, which can be thought of as a focus on the 'remainder' – what is left out after sociology and an analysis of the power structure have accounted for habitus in the structuration of the field and discipline in surveillance – the example of journalists in the PRC cannot be 'remaindered.' Journalists are not alienated from the power structure and outside of its discursive frameworks, but are central to their constitution and upkeep.

In other words, in so far as the journalistic field is part of the power system in the PRC, the move that Certeau (1984) makes to bracket off certain types of practices from those associated with the works of Bourdieu and Foucault cannot be made with respect to PRC media. Pan's (2000) and Pan & Lu's (2003) work is an extremely productive move for introducing the Certeauian problematic into the analysis of PRC media. But the work of Bourdieu (1977) and Foucault (1977) cannot be so easily bracketed off as it is in the case of the work of Certeau (1984), without an attendant loss of an understanding of the limits of resistance.

In short, what I am proposing is that to account for media reform in the PRC, Certeau (1984), as Pan & Lu (2003) have suggested, is a necessary first step in extending institutional analysis beyond the political economy of media reform. But Certeau (1984) alone is not enough, since a focus on bounded innovation and resistance risks the charge of media-centrism and of overstating the degree of agency associated with news makers, even if the power structure is re-introduced as a boundary condition, but almost as an afterthought. What is required is a reconceptualization of the relationship of the work of Certeau (1984) to that of Bourdieu (1977) and Foucault (1977) in cases where the agents are not residual to the concerns of the operation of power, but central, as is the case with journalists in the PRC who are both instruments and critics of power.

Put simply, journalists in the PRC are not somehow outside of the journalistic field, or not subject to the surveillance and discipline of the power structure as the case would be for Certeau's (1984) analysis to apply as Certeau (1984) applies it in his analysis of what is outside of Bourdieu's (1977) and Foucault's (1977) analyses. On the contrary, the journalistic field is deeply imbricated in the power structure as both subject and object of surveillance and control. Therefore any account of resistance and bounded innovation in PRC media reform must also account for the structuration of the journalistic field and the discipline and control the power system exercises over and within that field.

In the case of CCTV-9, the OSC blueprint functioned as a synthesis of the structuration of the field. It crystallized the political economic, technological, regulatory, censorial and institutional forces that shape media reform in the PRC. At the same time it also functioned as a symbol of discipline and control that the authorities exercised over and within that field, or did not exercise as the case may be. But crucially here the failure of CCTV-9 to carry out the original intention of the OSC blueprint was only possible

through the discursive reconfiguration of the role of CCTV-9 within the power system, and not as a residual element of it. As a result control was contested, contained and co-opted from within by agents who are too deeply imbricated in the power structure for Certeau's (1984) examples to suffice.

It would be too easy to simply say that CCTV-9 duped the CPD and SARFT, although this is what a cursory look at the situation might suggest. On reflection however, in so far as the journalistic field is part of the power system, duping the CPD and SARFT would mean the system was duping itself. But the survey of content in this dissertation indicated the opposite. Whatever resistance news makers at CCTV-9 offered within the power structure, the news very much reflected a set of narratives that reinforced the dominant hegemony of the Party/State rather than contested it. Nevertheless, in so far as the journalistic field is part of the power system, each act of resistance, however negligible in and of itself, necessarily affected the overall balance of power. This is how hegemony is contested and this is how change happens from within.

What might be the future for CCTV-9? Zhao Yuezhi (1998) has noted that the television news system in the PRC is closer, at least editorially, to a public service system than it is to the commercial systems with which it is so often contrasted, especially in the context of the shift to media commercialization beginning in the late 1970s. As a result, caught between Party/State and commercial power, news makers in the PRC are increasingly subject to the discipline of both the Party line and the bottom line, as Zhao (1998) put it.

Constrained by this double bind, a range of analysts have written of the problems journalists face. He Zhou (2000b) writes of the erosion of professional ethics as the market opens up space for personal enrichment, even as the Party and State engage in a tug of war over control of media. He (2000c) also writes of journalists' "ideological



dissonance” when they are forced to act against their personal and professional ethical systems, resulting in strategies for reducing dissonance that typically involve a compromise with one’s convictions about one’s work as a vocation. He further suggests that most journalists feel a strong sense of dissonance, and that the strategy of pushing the envelope is the most prevalent in trying to bring professional and private belief systems into line (He, 2000c, pp. 606, 609).

Zhao (1998) has written of endemic corruption corroding the media system in the PRC as a result of the introduction of the market. Zhao notes that corruption is “not just a few individuals but an institutional and occupational phenomenon involving the majority of journalists and the majority of media organizations from the smallest to the very pinnacle of the Party’s propaganda apparatus” (Zhao, 1998, p. 72).

Pan (2000) writes of improvisation in journalistic routines as an important element in understanding how journalists navigate the chaos associated with media reform as an ongoing project. He defines improvisation as “the ways in which journalists design, implement, and justify their non-routine journalistic practices that function to weaken, circumvent, and erode the hegemony of the commandist system associated with the Communist ideology” (Pan, 2000, p. 73).

The picture here is one of journalists struggling to cope with the demands of both Party/State and market, not to mention the audience. Weighed down by multiple obligations, they struggle to cope with the arbitrary diktat of the Party/State, the siren song of the market and the prospects of a career dashed on the rocks of corruption. Not surprisingly, when threatened, they protect themselves by working to rule, hiding their true feelings and retreating into a private realm where they can protect their consciences from personal conflict with the demands of their professional lives.

However, what is missing from this picture and what I hope this dissertation has provided is some sense of the pride many journalists have in their work, their sense of mission and purpose and the professionalism they bring to their work. Most importantly, as this dissertation has shown, they are not cowed by the CPD and SARFT, as one might suspect from reading the literature. Rather, as the evidence I have presented suggests, they negotiate the hazards of their profession not with timidity, but with a cautious confidence.

The problem with PRC media studies is not what is said. Rather, it is what is not said. Almost invariably, whenever a piece of research about media in the PRC is presented, the implied norm against which that medium is measured and usually found wanting is an ideal typical press model, which implies the Western press model. But a veritable industry (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; McChesney, 1999; Mosco, 1996; Murdock, 1990; Schiller, 1992 et al.) tells us that the Western press model is deeply ideological. Not only are the norms of accuracy, balance and objectivity ideologies that do not bear out in practice, but the political economy of the Western press works to mask the class character of journalism and the deep commitment mainstream media have to buttressing rather than questioning the balance of power within the system, even if the abuse of power occasionally is brought to light.

Constituted as a fourth estate, the Western press is a pillar of the power system, and works to defend, stabilize and reproduce that system. In this sense the Western press and media in the PRC are barely distinguishable. Both speak for the power structure and are deeply invested in both maintaining and contesting their position within the dominant hegemony, without attempting to overthrow that hegemony. Yet, because so little of the research on media systems is comparative, dominating the academic imagination is an unbridgeable gulf between the Western and PRC media systems based on different forms

of ownership, regulation and control, and the allegedly different goals of the media systems as such – the one that allegedly checks and balances power, the other that functions only as a mouthpiece for power. As a result, too little attention is paid to the remarkable similarities between the two media systems that do exist, side by side with the contrasts.

Not only are the PRC's media, including increasingly news media, responsive to the market, but journalists universally are constituted as agents of the power system, and in a deeply conflicted relationship with the power structure in so far as their watchdog role demands that they speak truth to power. And although analysts concur that in the case of the PRC, the principle problem for media reform is the Party/State, the answer is not necessarily in shifting control of media from the Party/State to the market, nor is it in further de-regulation of the media market. Rather, I would argue that the best possible future for the PRC's television news system is in a re-structuring of the regulatory regime.

If in the West, laws and the norms of professionalism protect journalists, in the PRC, journalists work without legal protection, either from intervention into their work by the Party/State, or from the diktat of the market. In so dangerous a situation, what drove journalists at CCTV-9 to act as they did was their habitus, the cultural roots of the profession in the traditional relationship of the intellectual to the power structure and the deep sense of social justice that characterized the practice of journalism in Imperial and Republican China and continues to characterize news making in the PRC.

What makes CCTV different from arguably the world's most democratic mainstream television systems, the public service broadcasting systems, is not the issue of the market and state, ownership and control. Rather, it is the editorial autonomy and

employment security that provides public service broadcast journalists with protection from the diktat of both the state and the market.

The literature recognizes the quality of broadcasters such as the BBC, CBC Canada, NHK Japan, ARD Germany, ABC Australia, etc. CCTV could join the ranks of broadcasters such as these, but only if regulations are enacted that both protect it from the worst excesses of the market, which since 1978 has been eroding its autonomy, while also protecting its news divisions from the arbitrary intervention of the Party/State into their work.

Currently, the PRC has no legislation that directly addresses the role of journalists. Rather, news work is governed by regulations and directives. Should the PRC enact a press law, then one would hope it will protect journalists from both the Party/State and the market. The issue of a press law was on the table in the mid-1980s. Tiananmen put an end to that project. However, the socially progressive wing of the Party/State and its supporters in the academy and in media, including at CCTV, continue to nurture hopes for a democratizing press law.

Zhao (1998) argues that the best possible future for the PRC is one where the gains of both formal and substantive democracy are protected:

In the West, where democracy in the narrow sense has been achieved, democratic forces are struggling for a broadened definition of sustainable democracy with a focus on equality while fighting against the deterioration of existing democratic institutions and various anti-liberal democratic backlashes. In China, democratic forces should struggle to achieve democracy in the narrow sense while at the same time guarding against losing the progressive gains of the socialist revolution and whatever has been achieved in the name of a broad definition of democracy. (p. 190)

To this end, Marxists, both reformists, notwithstanding Lee's (2000a) assessment that they have been reduced to "exile, dissent and irrelevance" (p. 564), and radicals

associated with the PRC's New Left, have been struggling inside the PRC since the 1980s, and losing the battle, to develop a media system appropriate both to the gains of the revolution, and in opposition to the commercial logic of an unfettered market in media, including news media, which has destroyed the relative autonomy of journalists in media systems such as that of the United States, where news media operate without appropriate protection from ratings as the primary criterion by which success is measured.

Against the success of state-protected public service media in many liberal and social democracies, measuring news and entertainment by the same yardstick historically prevented public service television from developing in the United States. The PRC has the seeds of a public service broadcast system in CCTV. But the commercial logic of the market will destroy its further development, unless laws are enacted that protect it. But those or complementary laws must also protect journalists from the intervention of the Party/State, if television news is to develop more as a public service than as a Party/State service.

Therefore the core issue for media reform and media democratization in the PRC is neither the issue of the Party/State, nor the issue of the market. Rather it is the issue of media regulation and the appropriate relationship between Party/State, market, and media as determined by law. The fate and future of CCTV-9 depends on such laws. Meanwhile, news makers will continue to push the envelope where possible in the minutiae of everyday news making and continue their largely invisible work changing media from within and expanding what journalists can do in the PRC.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Despite the difficulty of reading Certeau (1984) back through Bourdieu (1977) and Foucault (1977) in terms that account for change from within, one has only to imagine the role of news makers in the PRC in terms similar to those that frame the work of journalists within public service media systems in capitalist democracies to understand how journalists can be both servants and critics of power. Nobody questions the right of BBC journalists, for example, as public servants to question the actions of the British government. Although journalists in the PRC operate without the protection of a charter that legitimizes their actions, their habitus is that of professionalized news makers, instruments of power concerned to speak truth to power. That they operate without a charter that legitimizes their actions only makes them the braver journalists for the risks they take on a daily basis. Describing this practice as the art of hitting line balls does not do justice to the very real stakes for which media are playing in the PRC.

After spending over two years at CCTV-9 between mid-2003 and late 2005, I came away convinced of the courage and professionalism of many of my Chinese colleagues, from senior management to interns. However, the control that the survey of content provided for the observation, interview and data related elements of this dissertation indicated that the ‘wai xuan’ function of CCTV-9 predominated in the domestic and foreign policy news even if the foreign news was characterized by “systematic typification.”

I have argued that social responsibility and activism have characterized the history of journalism in Imperial and Republican China and the PRC as much as its mouthpiece role. However, if the Party/State has been the greatest constraint on socially responsible and activist journalism in recent decades, today progressive journalism is increasingly under threat from the market. Given the emerging class character of the

journalistic field in the PRC, not surprisingly, journalists see social responsibility increasingly in terms of defending the same middle class interests that the Party/State is increasingly associated with through its development of the market as a primary site of legitimation. If the interests of media and the Party/State continue to converge on the issue of the market, then the 'ideological dissonance' that characterizes the conflicted attitude journalists have to their double function as instruments and critics of power could well morph into the 'ideological consonance' that characterizes the relationship between journalists and the power structure in capitalist democracies. In this context 'wai xuan' is likely to increasingly take on the character of nationalism associated with the rise of a bourgeoisie in earlier transitions to capitalism, with the full support of media.

As a result, regardless of the future development of media in the PRC, the 'wai xuan' function of CCTV-9 would not only not appear to be under no threat in the foreseeable future, but the kind of nationalist sentiment that underpins media systems, whether public service or commercial, in capitalist democracies is likely to become more evident at CCTV-9, where, for want of a better term, 'statist nationalism' now prevails. Whether that brings CCTV-9 closer into line with its competitors such as BBC-WS and CNN-I, which it seeks to emulate, only comparative analysis will tell.

#### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

In order to position CCTV-9 within the expanding field of 24-hour global English language channels, comparative analysis is required. However, if we are to find out what channels like CCTV-9 do, then the starting point cannot be ideology and the attempt to delegitimize or legitimize one news system or another in terms of its alleged news values and the political, economic, cultural and institutional contexts within which each is embedded. Rather I would suggest that a better starting point for fruitful comparative

analysis would be to look at how particular news systems handle particular topics. Compare for example CCTV-9's handling of the HIV/AIDS story with that of another global broadcaster on the same story or a similar story in a different setting. Another example: during the final phase of writing up this dissertation, the controversy over Tibet and its relationship with the PRC exploded around the Beijing 2008 Olympics torch relay. How different media such as CCTV-9, CNN-I and the BBC-WS handled this story would make an interesting case study.

In addition to the need for comparative analysis, continued research on the development of CCTV-9 would be functional to taking the pulse of the 'going out' project and the state of the 'wai xuan' system. For example, I have barely touched on the political economy of CCTV-9, although political economy has been one of the core frameworks for analysis. At the time of doing the research, the channel was financed by CCTV and sanctioned by SARFT. As a result, CCTV-9 was not subject to the discipline of the market that is increasingly the norm in PRC media. However, if that situation were to change for CCTV-9, then research on the impact of the market on the channel would surely provide insight into the manner in which the channel then negotiates the tension between its 'wai xuan' and commercial functions.

I noted in the introduction that I did not deal with the question of bureaucracy and the possibility of bureaucratic inertia as an explanation for the failure of the relaunch to deliver on the OSC blueprint. CCTV-9 was a completely bureaucratized institution. As a result, every decision made within the channel was in one sense the result of bureaucracy. Moreover, no other decision making process existed, such as submitting the channel to the test of the market. So, to argue that elements of the relaunch failed because of bureaucratic inertia would be to have no answer for elements of the relaunch that succeeded, such as construction of the new studio, sets, newsroom, etc. From my time at



the channel, what was clear was that nothing in the nature of the decision-making process itself at CCTV-9 could account for what elements of the relaunch failed or succeeded, since the same decision making process was used throughout. However, were the channel to be subjected to the test of the market, or to an independent evaluation by experts on bureaucracy, then grounds would exist for testing the efficiency or otherwise of the bureaucratic structure at CCTV-9.

In addition, I have not attempted to unpack the unwieldy formulation Party/State, which represents the twin bureaucratic structures of the Party and government and nexus of policy, regulation, ownership and administration to which CCTV-9 is subject. The concept was originally formulated in the literature to recognize the deep imbrication of the Party in the State, given the presence of Party cells in every state institution and the formal subordination of the government to the Party. However, while the concept has provided an analytic shorthand that has served media studies well in the past, as contradictions between policy, regulation, ownership and administration grow with continued marketization of the overall political economy, a point is fast approaching, if it has not been reached already, when analysts can no longer afford to conflate the two.

For example, one of my interlocutors at CCTV-9 was explicit that the Party had less say at CCTV than is generally assumed because the broadcaster is production-oriented and program-driven, with the overarching imperative, endorsed by the Party, to make money. However, given CCTV-9's role in the 'wai xuan' system and given that the channel was not subject to the market in the manner in which CCTV as its parent broadcaster is exposed, the particular problems facing CCTV were not a consideration for the particular focus of this dissertation. However, I would suggest that as a general rule, any research into the political economy of media development in the PRC should account

for the different interests at stake, including the increasingly different interests of the Party and State.

Finally, my time at CCTV-9 convinced me of the efficacy of Pan's (2005) and Pan & Lu's (2003) insights into resistance and bounded innovation in PRC media reform. Even without accepting my argument for recognition of the continued importance of Bourdieu (1977) and Foucault (1977) in the PRC context for understanding media reform, Pan's (2005) and Pan & Lu's (2003) work should be developed to show how media change from within. Insights such as theirs allow analysis of PRC media reform to proceed from the internal dynamics of reform, rather than from the assumptions of inappropriate theoretical models based on the alleged relationship between media marketization and press and media freedom that have prevailed in the field for far too long. These models have ill-served analysis of commercial and public service media systems in the countries where they were developed. They have even less place in any attempt to understand what journalists in the PRC do.

## **Appendix 1: Sample interview questions**

Illustration 13: Sample interview questions for staff (Template 1)

- A) Filing data
  - 1. Date:
  - 2. Number:
  - 3. Job category: zhubian, director, copy editor, writer, reporter, anchor [circle one]
  - 4. Gender:
  - 5. Age:
- B) Personal details
  - 6. How long have you been at CCTV-9?
  - 7. Why did you decide to work for CCTV-9?
  - 8. What is your educational background?
  - 9. What did you do before you joined CCTV-9?
- C) Work-related information & attitudes to work
  - 10. What is your title?
  - 11. What is your salary?
  - 12. What is your attitude to your salary?
  - 13. How would you describe working conditions at CCTV-9?
  - 14. In what ways if any did the May 2004 relaunch affect your pay and or conditions at CCTV-9?
  - 15. What problems, if any, do you see in the way CCTV selects personnel for promotion?
  - 16. What are relations like among the Chinese staff at CCTV-9?

17. What are relations like between the Chinese and foreign staff at CCTV-9?
18. Do you enjoy working at CCTV-9?
19. Why? [follow up to previous question]
20. What have been the personal highlights of your time here?
21. What is most important for you in your job?
22. What is the easiest part of your job?
23. What is the hardest part of your job?
- D) May 2004 Relaunch
  24. What would you characterize as major changes at CCTV-9 since you joined the channel?
  25. How would you characterize the relaunch of CCTV-9 on May 3, 2004?
  26. How has the relaunch affected your work, if at all?
  27. How has it affected the work of the reporting team as a whole?
  28. Is China's media reforming?
  29. Examples? [follow up to previous question]
  30. What does the term "China's CNN" mean to you?
  31. Why should CCTV-9 compete with e.g. CNN International or BBC World Service?
  32. Can CCTV-9 compete with CNN-I, BBC-WS?
  33. Why [follow up to previous question]
- E) The work of the reporter [substitute appropriate job category]
  34. Are you happy with the types of stories CCTV-9 does?
  35. Why [follow up to previous question]
  36. Do you specialize in particular kinds of stories?
  37. What was your favorite story you did this year?

38. Why? [follow up to previous question]
39. What kinds of stories do you believe CCTV-9 should do?
40. Why? [follow up to previous question]
41. Do you have a target audience in mind when you are doing a story?
42. Whom? [follow up to previous question]
43. What is the role of the Internet in your work?
44. How do you define professionalism in your work?
45. How would you characterize the standard of professionalism within your team?
46. Who are the top 3 people in your team and why?
47. Is teamwork important at CCTV-9?
48. Why [follow up to previous question]
49. Is it possible to survive at CCTV-9 if you are not a team player?
50. What are the biggest challenges facing your team in the future?
51. Can the team meet those challenges?
52. Why? [follow up to previous question]
53. What changes would you like to see at CCTV-9 in the range of stories you can cover?
54. What makes a good news story?
55. Are all the stories we run good stories?
56. Why [follow up to previous question]
57. What do 'balance' and 'objectivity' mean to you?
58. Are these qualities in news important to you?
59. Are they important for CCTV-9?
60. Why? [follow up to previous question]

61. Is it possible to talk about Chinese news values?
62. Examples [if answer was 'yes' to previous question]
63. If you can compare Chinese to Western news, what do you think are the similarities and differences?
64. What does "Chinese perspective" mean to you?
65. What do you think of the way non-Chinese reporters report about China?
66. How would you compare the work of non-Chinese journalists reporting on China, with the work of CCTV-9?
67. What is your attitude to the foreigners working at CCTV-9? [or Chinese if asked of a 'foreign expert']
- F) Editorial policy
68. Who decides what stories to cover for CCTV-9?
69. When a major story breaks, who decides how it will be handled?
70. Do you get 'directives' telling you what to cover?
71. Examples? [follow up to previous question]
72. How big is your role in choosing which stories will go on air?
73. Do you wish we could air a broader range of stories?
74. Examples? [follow up to previous question]
75. Do you wish we could report more sides of the story?
76. Why? [follow up to previous question]
77. Does CCTV-9 tell the true story about China?
78. Why? [follow up to previous question]
79. Do you ever feel ashamed about what you are doing in your work?
80. Why? [follow up to previous question]
81. Is CCTV-9 biased?

82. Examples? [if 'yes' to previous question]
83. Is western news biased?
84. Examples? [if 'yes' to previous question]
- G) Attitude to Party & Government and their relationship to CCTV-9
85. How do you see the relationship between the Party, the government and media?
86. How do you feel about that relationship?
87. What does it mean to say news is the “mouthpiece” of the CPC and/or the Government?
88. Does this characterize the role of CCTV-9?
89. How?
90. Should this be the role of CCTV-9?
91. What should be the role of CCTV-9?
92. Is CCTV-9 fulfilling that role?
93. Can the audience trust the news from CCTV-9?
94. Why [follow up to previous question]
95. Is the Western perception fair, that the CCP and government ultimately determine the content of news in the PRC?
96. Why? [follow up previous question]
97. What do you feel about the current Party leadership who oversee media?  
[Interviewees were prompted with the names Li Changchun (Politburo member in charge of publicity) and Liu Yunshan (head of the CPD) if they were unable to answer this question.]
98. How (if at all) has the Party/Government media relationship changed from the time of Jiang Zemin as CPC General Secretary, when the CPD head

was Ding Guangen? [Li Changchun was Politburo member in charge of publicity under both Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao.]

99. Are you a Party member?
100. How does being a Party member affect your approach to your work?
- H) Censorship & control
101. Is the news at CCTV-9 censored?
102. How do the censors work? [if an interviewee answered 'yes' to the previous question]
103. Can you give examples when censors intervened in the news-making process?
104. How much self censorship do you practice?
105. Are you afraid of doing certain stories?
106. Why? [follow up to previous question]
107. Why do we ignore stories like the 15th anniversary [in 2004] of the Tiananmen incident?
108. Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao issues: Who decides how we shall report them?
109. How do you know how to report them? [issues relating to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao]
110. Chinese media are often criticized in the west for ignoring: human rights stories, political stories about e.g. Hong Kong and Taiwan, etc. What reaction do you have to this criticism?
111. How does the Party and Government exercise control over CCTV-9?



- 112. Can you provide examples of the control mechanisms? [Interviewees were prompted with terms like a) directives b) weekly meeting if they had not answer to this question]
- 113. Is most control proactive? Before? Or retroactive? After?
- 114. Is punishment part of the control system?
- 115. Have you ever put something in the news which caused you or the news team problems? If so what?
- 116. Which is the bigger problem: censorship or self-censorship?
- I) End questions
- 117. What did you think of this interview?
- 118. What did I leave out that I should have discussed?
- 119. Did you feel my questions were biased?
- 120. How would you have conducted this interview to remove bias? [if answer was 'yes' to previous question]
- 121. Is there anything you would like to add?

Illustration 14: Sample interview questions for senior management (Template 2)

- A) Filing data
  - 1. Date:
  - 2. Number:
  - 3. Job category: manager
  - 4. Gender:
  - 5. Age:
- B) Personal details
  - 6. How long have you been at CCTV-9?
  - 7. Why did you decide to work for CCTV-9?
  - 8. What is your educational background?
  - 9. What did you do before you joined CCTV-9?
- C) Work-related information & attitudes to work
  - 10. What is your title?
  - 11. What is your salary?
  - 12. What is your attitude to your salary?
  - 13. How would you describe working conditions at CCTV-9?
  - 14. In what ways if any did the May 2004 relaunch affect your pay and or conditions at CCTV-9?
  - 15. What problems, if any, do you see in the way CCTV selects personnel for promotion?
  - 16. What are relations like among the Chinese staff at CCTV-9?
  - 17. What are relations like between the Chinese and foreign staff at CCTV-9?
  - 18. Do you enjoy working at CCTV-9?

19. Why? [follow up to previous question]
20. What have been the personal highlights of your time here?
21. What is most important for you in your job?
22. What is the easiest part of your job?
23. What is the hardest part of your job?
- D) May 2004 Relaunch
24. What would you characterize as major changes at CCTV-9 since you joined the channel?
25. How would you characterize the relaunch of CCTV-9 on May 3, 2004?
26. Who ordered the relaunch?
27. Why? [follow up to previous question]
28. What was your role in the relaunch?
29. What was the role of the relaunch committee?
30. Looking back, was the relaunch successful?
31. Why? [follow up to previous question]
32. How would you do the relaunch differently if you could?
33. Who designed the new sets for the relaunch?
34. Did they have any support, or was it their work alone?
35. Who designed the new graphics for the relaunch?
36. Did they have any support, or was it their work alone?
37. What does the term “China’s CNN” mean to you?
38. Who first used the term and in what context?
- E) About CCTV-9
39. What is the role of CCTV-9 in the ‘waixuan’ [overseas publicity] system?
40. What kinds of stories do you believe CCTV-9 should do?

41. Why? [follow up to previous question]
42. Do you ever feel ashamed about what you are doing in your work?
43. Why? [follow up to previous question]
44. Who are the CCTV-9 target audience?
45. What is the role of the Internet in the newsroom?
46. How do you define professionalism at CCTV-9?
47. How would you characterize the standard of professionalism at CCTV-9?
48. Who are the top 3 personnel at CCTV-9 and why?
49. Is teamwork important at CCTV-9?
50. Why [follow up to previous question]
51. What is the role of guanxi at CCTV-9?
52. How would you characterize the role of the foreigners working at CCTV-9?
53. What is the role of the outside consultants to CCTV-9?
54. What are the biggest challenges facing CCTV-9 in the future?
55. Can the channel meet those challenges?
56. Why? [follow up to previous question]
57. What changes would you like to see at CCTV-9 in the range of stories you can cover?
58. What makes a good news story?
59. Are all the stories we run good stories?
60. Which ones are not and why not? [follow up to previous question]
61. What do 'balance' and 'objectivity' mean to you?
62. Are these qualities in news important to you, and to CCTV-9?
63. Why? [follow up to previous question]

64. Is it possible to talk about Chinese news values?
65. Examples [if answer was 'yes' to previous question]
66. If you can compare Chinese to Western news, what do you think are the similarities and differences?
67. What does "Chinese perspective" mean to you?
68. What do you think of the way non-Chinese reporters report about China?
69. How would you compare the work of non-Chinese journalists reporting on China, with the way CCTV-9 reports on China?
- F) Editorial policy
70. Who decides what stories to cover for CCTV-9?
71. Who decides which stories will go to air, after they are covered?
72. When a major story breaks, who decides how it will be handled?
73. Do you get 'directives' telling you what to cover?
74. Examples? [follow up to previous question]
75. How big is your role in choosing which stories will go on air?
76. Do you wish you could report a broader range of stories?
77. Why? [follow up to previous question]
78. Do you wish you could report more sides of the story?
79. Why? [follow up to previous question]
80. Does CCTV-9 tell the true story about China?
81. Why? [follow up to previous question]
82. Is CCTV-9 biased?
83. Examples? [if 'yes' to previous question]
84. Is western news biased?
85. Examples? [if 'yes' to previous question]

- G) Attitude to Party & Government and their relationship to CCTV-9
86. How do you see the relationship between the Party, the government and media?
  87. How do you feel about that relationship?
  88. What does it mean to say news is the mouthpiece of the CPC and/or Government?
  89. Does this characterize the role of CCTV-9?
  90. How?
  91. Should this be the role of CCTV-9?
  92. What should be the role of CCTV-9?
  93. Is CCTV-9 fulfilling that role?
  94. Can the audience trust the news from CCTV-9?
  95. Why [follow up to previous question]
  96. Is the Western perception fair, that the CCP and government ultimately determine the content of news in the PRC?
  97. Is this a good thing? Bad thing? [follow up previous question]
  98. What do you feel about the current Party leadership who oversee media?  
[Interviewees were prompted with the names Li Changchun (Politburo member in charge of publicity) and Liu Yunshan (head of the CPD) if they were unable to answer this question.]
  99. How (if at all) has the Party/Government media relationship changed from the time of Jiang Zemin as CPC General Secretary, when the CPD head was Ding Guangen? [Li Changchun was Politburo member in charge of publicity under both Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao.]
  100. Are you a Party member?

101. How does being a Party member affect your approach to your work?
- H) Censorship & control
102. Is the news at CCTV-9 censored?
  103. Why? [follow up to previous question]
  104. Why do we ignore stories like the 15th anniversary [2004] of the Tiananmen incident?
  105. Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao issues: Who decides how we shall report them?
  106. Chinese media are often criticized in the west for ignoring: human rights stories, political stories about e.g. Hong Kong and Taiwan, etc. What reaction do you have to this criticism?
  107. How does the Party and Government exercise control over CCTV-9?
  108. Can you provide examples of the control mechanisms? [Interviewees were prompted with terms like a) directives b) weekly meeting if they had not answer to this question]
  109. Is most control proactive? Before? Or retroactive? After?
  110. Is punishment part of the control system?
  111. Which is the bigger problem: censorship or self-censorship?
  112. Examples? [follow up to previous question]
- I) End questions
113. What did you think of this interview?
  114. What did I leave out that I should have discussed?
  115. Did you feel my questions were biased?
  116. How would you have conducted this interview to remove bias? [if answer was 'yes' to previous question]

117. Is there anything you would you would like to add?



## Appendix 2: Content coding sheets

### UNIT OF ANALYSIS #1: RUNDOWN

#### Rundown coding sheet

Number:	a) Coded element	b) Coding (fill in or circle one)
Rundown *	[A] Date	
	[B] Bulletin	1200 / 2400
	[C] Bulletin length	
	[D] Duration anchor on screen & speaking **	
	[E] Duration anchor not on screen but speaking **	
	[F] Duration story not voiced by anchor Story duration ***	
	[G] Run	a) first run b) repeat
	[H] Dept. ****	a) News b) Asia Today b) Biz China c) Culture Express d) Sports e) World Insight f) Other
	[I] Source	a) CCTV 1 or 4 b) Reporter c) <i>Xinhua</i> d) Reuters / AP e) Mixed ***** f) Other g) Unknown h) Graphics
	[J] Type	a) copy b) take c) story (writer) d) story (reporter) e) 2-way f) filler *****

- \* For a sample of the coding of a rundown and a story, see Appendix 3.
- \*\* Whether the choice was [D] and [E] depended on [J].
- \*\*\* Story duration was derived by adding [D] and/or [E] & [F].
- \*\*\*\* [H] (Responsible or Production) Dept. was determined by the writer, whose name or initials was on the rundown.
- \*\*\*\*\* Mixed: a mix of PRC and international news agency (AP and/or Reuters) sources
- \*\*\*\*\* Filler: open and closing credits; headlines; recap of headlines; promotional spots for other shows; anchor signoff; weather (advertisements were not included, as CCTV-9 did not start running advertisements until January, 2005).

The definitions of the coded elements were as follows:

- [A] Date (date of bulletin) – transcribed from Rundown
- [B] Bulletin (whether 1200 or 2400) – transcribed from Rundown
- [C] Bulletin length (total duration of bulletin) – transcribed from Rundown and checked against the totals derived by adding D and/or E, F.
- [D] Duration anchor on screen & speaking (that component of the bulletin when the anchor is visible) – transcribed from Rundown
- [E] Duration anchor not on screen but speaking (typically in a ‘take’ story, which is voiced by the anchor, but shows video or graphics while the anchor’s voice is only heard) – transcribed from Rundown
- [F] Duration story not voiced by anchor (This is that part of the story voiced by the writer, foreign expert, reporter, etc., usually preceded by an introduction voiced by the anchor, with the anchor visible on screen. Typically this is thought of as “the story.” However, I treat the anchor’s introduction as part of the story.) – calculated from Rundown

- [G] Run (Run was defined as whether it was the first time a story ran, or whether it was repeated from an earlier bulletin) – transcribed from Rundown
- [H] Dept. (defined as the news department responsible for the story, whether that department produced the story) – determined by writer and transcribed from Rundown
- [I] Source (the audio visual and/or textual source from which the writer/reporter made the story) – transcribed from Rundown
- [J] Type (of story: copy, take, story, etc.) – transcribed from Rundown

## UNIT OF ANALYSIS #2: SCRIPT

### 1) Topic coding sheet

Story Number:

Circle 1	Category	Definition
1	<b>CRIME</b>	Crime (against the person or property, excluding war crimes and crimes against the state or between states, which go under SECURITY or WAR HISTORY)
2	<b>CULTURE</b>	Culture, Education & Sport Related
3	<b>DISASTER</b>	Accident, Disaster (man-made & natural), Disease, Drought, Flood & Bad Weather Related (excluding environmental protection and preparations for floods & droughts)
4	<b>ECONOMICS</b>	Agriculture, Business, Economics, Finance, Food Safety, Industry & Trade related (excluding employment issues, which go under SOCIAL)
5	<b>NATURE &amp; SCIENCE</b>	Nature, Science, Environment & Technology (including environmental protection and preparations for floods & droughts. However, once a flood or drought happens it goes in DISASTER)
6	<b>POLITICS</b>	Politics, Governance, Foreign Policy (between non-PRC states, but excluding trade issues which go under ECONOMICS & Iraq-or Israel/Palestine issues, which go under SECURITY)
7	<b>SECURITY</b>	Conflict, Military, Nuclear Proliferation, Security (such as NATO, SCO), Terrorism, War & WMD related (post 1980: Start of Iran Iraq war)
8	<b>SOCIETY</b>	Employment, Health (treatment NOT DISEASE), Medical & Social Security Related
9	<b>WAR HISTORY</b>	Historical War Related (pre-1980: Start of Iran Iraq war) (inc. War Anniversaries, Compensation claims, etc.)
10	<b>OTHER</b>	Any topic which does not fit the above categories

## 2) Referred to & who speaks coding sheet

Story Number:

	Category	Definition	No. Unique Mentions
1	<b>BUSINESS</b>	Business, company (including multinationals), state-owned enterprise related and managers, finance	
2	<b>EXPERTS</b>	Analysts, academics, experts, academic institutions	
3	<b>INTL ORGN &amp; NGO</b>	International organizations (UN, WTO, Arab League, EU, Red Cross, etc., all NGOs)	
4	<b>MEDIA</b>	Any media (regardless of relationship to state)	
5	<b>MILITARY</b>	Military, police, security services	
6	<b>OFFICIAL</b>	Any form of official (political, administrative at any level, including executive, legislative, judicial); include formal opposition such as political parties; include former politicians, regardless of current function; (excludes all forms of MILITARY; excludes all MEDIA; exclude any EXPERT; exclude any form of OPPOSITION not recognized by the state it opposes; exclude any protest (put in OPPOSITION))	
7	<b>OPPOSITION</b>	Terrorists, insurgents, militants, suicide bombers, opposition rebels, protestors, criminals (of any kind), prisoners (not hostages, which are VICTIM)	
8	<b>VICTIM</b>	Any person(s) injured or killed in any situation (accident, disaster, conflict, protest, sick from disease, etc.); any victim(s) of any crime	
9	<b>WORKER</b>	Any form of work including farming, manufacturing, cultural, sporting, legal, medical, etc. (excluding EXPERT and MEDIA work)	
10	<b>OTHER</b>	Anybody who does not fit above categories (e.g. people, persons, ethnicities, tourists, visitors, religious devotees, families (including of VICTIMS), sources, witnesses, etc.	

## Original referred to & who speaks categories

The above ten categories were derived through redistribution of the following fifty-nine:

1. CENTRAL LEVEL POLITICAL/GOVERNMENT
2. PROVINCIAL/STATE LEVEL POLITICAL/GOVERNMENT
3. LOCAL LEVEL POLITICAL/GOVERNMENT
4. MILITARY
5. MANAGER/BUSINESS
6. SCIENTIST/EXPERT/ANALYST (OR INSTITUTE)/ACADEMICS
7. WORKER
8. FARMER
9. CITIZEN
10. SPORTSMAN/SPORT RELATED
11. MEDIA
12. WHITE COLLAR
13. VICTIMS - DEAD
14. INSURGENTS/TERRORISTS/SUICIDE BOMBERS/MILITANTS
15. CRITICS OF GOVT
16. MULTINATIONALS
17. PUBLIC SERVANTS
18. JUDICIARY
19. CRIMINALS/GANGS
20. PROTESTERS/SUPPORTERS
21. LEGISLATURE/PARTIES/POLITICIANS
22. EU OBSERVERS
23. ARMED GOVT OPPN/REBELS
24. EU
25. TOURISTS

26. RELIGIOUS DEVOTEES
27. DIPLOMATS
28. RELIGIOUS LEADERS/OFFICIALS/INSTITUTIONS
29. ETHNICITIES
30. SUSPECTED TERRORISTS
31. SOURCES
32. POLICE/SECURITY
33. BUSINESS/FINANCE
34. MEDICAL RELATED
35. FORMER POLITICIAN/ADMINISTRATION
36. WITNESS
37. INJURED/ILL/VICTIMS ALIVE/HOSTAGES
38. CN PROV GOVT
39. SOE/SOE-related
40. AUDIENCE/SUPPORTERS/FANS
41. CULTURE RELATED
42. EMERGENCY PERSONNEL
43. OFFICIALS OF ANY TYPE WHO ARE LOWER DOWN THAN  
CENTRAL GOVT, BUT NOT ASSOCIATED WITH PROVISIONAL OR  
LOCAL GOVT
44. INDUSTRY RELATED
45. CUSTOMERS
46. MISSIONARY
47. MIGRANT WORKERS
48. NGO RELATED

- 49. FESTIVAL
- 50. CRITICS
- 51. PRISON/PRISONERS
- 52. STUDENTS
- 53. MIGRANT WORKERS
- 54. ACTIVIST/RIGHTS PROPONENTS
- 55. INVESTORS/SHAREHOLDERS
- 56. HUMANITARIAN RELATED
- 57. DELEGATES
- 58. PRISONERS
- 59. TAIWAN INDEPENDENCE FORCES



Illustration 15: Screenshot of Excel spreadsheet used to analyze coding

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1	Element	A	B	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	ORIENTATION	TOPIC	N	O
2	Story #																
3	€1	1-Feb-04	1200	00:00		00:25				Opening							
4	€2	1-Feb-04	1200	00:00	00:40	00:00				Headlines							
5	€3	1-Feb-04	1200	00:16	00:18	00:00	1st	news	unknown	Take	Chinese govt. confident of bird flu controls	anchor	Cairo China	Foreign Policy	DISEASE		President Hu Jintao (Ch.) government (Ch.) people
6	€3																
7	€3																
8	€4	1-Feb-04	1200	00:29	00:00	00:00	Rpt	news	Xinhua	Copy	2 new suspected bird flu outbreaks in China	anchor	China Hubei P. Guangdong P. Harbin C.	Domestic	DISEASE		(Ch.) Min. Agriculture (Ch.) Local Govts (Ch.) Natl Bird Flu Lab
9	€4																
10	€4																
11	€4																
12	€5	1-Feb-04	1200	00:27	00:00	02:27	Rpt	news	unknown	R. Story	China takes new measures against bird flu	reporter	China Hunan P. Hubei P. Guangxi P. Shanghai C. Dingdang T. Vietnam Thailand Anhui P. Beijing C.	Foreign Policy	DISEASE	(Ch.) Local Govts (Ch.) Citizens (F.) Citizens (Ch.) Farmers (Ch.) State Admin. (Ch.) Health Inspector (Ch.) Manager (Ch.) Vice president	
13	€5																
14	€5																
15	€5																
16	€5																
17	€5																
18	€5																
19	€5																
20	€5															Rep.	
21	€5																
22	€6	1-Feb-04	1200	00:15	00:00	01:47	1	news	CCTV	W. Story	Asian countries step up bird flu prevention	writer	Thailand Vietnam Indonesia Japan Singapore Myanmar Malaysia Thailand	Foreign	DISEASE	(F.) TH. Health Minister (F.) Victim (F.) VN Prime Minister (F.) ID Govt. Rep. (F.) JP Govt. Rep. (F.) SG Govt. Rep. (F.) MM Govt. Rep. (F.) MY Govt. Rep. (U) WHO	
23	€6																
24	€6																
25	€6																
26	€6																
27	€6																
28	€6																
29	€6																
30	€6																

### **Appendix 3: Samples of rundown and script coded**

The illustration on p. 488 shows the first page of the bulletin rundown for Feb. 1, 2004, 1200 News, the first set of scripts coded. The illustration on p. 489 shows a sample of a coded script. In both the rundown and script, the names and/or initials of all persons who worked at CCTV-9 have been blacked out. For an understanding of the coding keys, please refer to Appendix 2.

Illustration 16: Sample bulletin rundown coded for February 1, 2004, 1200 CCTV News

**CCTV-9 Program**

2004-02-01 12:00 ENGLISH NEWS [2:00 ENGLISH NEWS]  
总长: 29'48" [C]

导演: [REDACTED]  
打印时间: 2004年04月11日 19时28分

序号	节目标题	导语长	正文长	累计时	记者	首播版次
1	1200 headlines 1 [REDACTED] 1/2 [E]	0'25	0'40	0'25	[REDACTED]	2004-02-01 12:00 [G]
2	EGYPT: HU JINTAO/BIRD FLU [H]	0'34 [D]	0'00	1'39	[REDACTED]	2004-02-01 12:00
3	[REDACTED] TAKE GRAPHICS/12 [REDACTED]					
4	COPY: CHINA NEW BIRD FLU [REDACTED] 2200 [XII]	0'29	0'00	2'08	[REDACTED]	2004-01-31 10:00
5	4 CHINA: AVIAN INFLUENZA [REDACTED] 1900 [REDACTED]	0'27	2'27 [F]	2'35	[REDACTED]	2004-01-31 08:00
6	5 Asia: b flu story [REDACTED] 1200 cctv [REDACTED]	0'15	1'47	5'17	[REDACTED]	2004-02-01 12:00
7	6 COPY: GUANGDONG SARS [REDACTED] COPY/1900 [J]	0'43	0'00	7'47	[REDACTED]	2004-01-31 03:00
8	7 1200 headlines [REDACTED]	0'03	0'20	7'50	[REDACTED]	2004-02-01 12:00
9	8 PROMO [J]	0'49	0'00	8'59	[REDACTED]	2003-06-10 10:00
10	9 IRAQ EXPLOSIONS (1000/TV/W8 [REDACTED])	0'51	0'00	9'50	[REDACTED]	2004-02-01 10:00
11	10 Mideast: Barrier -0306 w5 [REDACTED]	0'20	1'19	10'10	[REDACTED]	2004-02-01 10:00
12	11 IRAN: KHATAMI (TV/10 [REDACTED] AP) [I]	0'58	0'00	12'27	[REDACTED]	2004-02-01 10:00
13	12 US: Bush Radio -0800 (15ap1600 [REDACTED]) [J]	0'25	0'25	12'52	[REDACTED]	2004-02-01 10:00
14	13 US CAMPAIGN DEAN (W8 STORY) 1200 [REDACTED] [H]	0'25	1'43	13'42	[REDACTED]	2004-02-01 12:00
15	14 uk: security (1000/tv [REDACTED] ap1800 [REDACTED])	0'40	0'00	16'05	[REDACTED]	2004-02-01 10:00

Illustration 17: Sample script coded 'Muslim Festival' from February 1, 2004, 1200  
CCTV News

【Super】MUSLIM FESTIVAL

【Super】Muslims celebrate Kurban Bayami [K]

【Lead\_in】

Returning to our earlier story...although the tragedy in  
[M] Saudi Arabia has overshadowed the climax of the Hajj,  
[O] Muslims worldwide on Sunday began celebrating the Kurban  
Bayami. It's also called the Festival of Sacrifice and goes  
for the next three days. Here in [M] China, [O] Muslims [O] celebrated  
at a feast organized by [O] China's Islamic Association in the  
capital [M] Beijing. Our reporter [M] Mao Xuzhi was there, and has  
the following story. [L]

【Voice\_over】

The Kurban Bayami began on Sunday. Over a billion Muslims  
worldwide will celebrate over the next three days. Here,  
[O] diplomats from 30 Arab and Muslim countries gather at a  
hotel in Beijing. The feast is the biggest celebration on  
the Islamic calendar.

The feast begins with a prayer. They call for peace and  
goodwill amongst [O] all people, and for an end to war,  
especially in Islamic countries affected by conflict.

【Super】

[N] CHEN GUANGYUAN, Chairman

China Islamic Association

【Sound\_bite】(C)

"This festival honors Allah. We pray for peace throughout  
the world, and among all people. And we pray for happiness  
for all mankind."

## **Appendix 4: Inter-coder reliability sample**

### **1200 CCTV NEWS PRE-RELAUNCH (SET 1)**

#### **Copy Story**

#### ***Copy 1: (SUPER) IRAQ WMD***

(SLUG) UN to resume weapons inspection in Iraq

(LEAD IN) The lengthy weapons inspection process in Iraq looks likely to resume soon. UN arms inspectors have said they're ready to continue their mission anytime the UN Security Council gives them the green light. The UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, or UNMOVIC, has submitted a report to the Security Council, specifying its ongoing work. Attached to the report is a compendium of Iraq's past proscribed weapons program. UNMOVIC is urging the Security Council to set a timeframe to discuss its future role, adding that delays would hamper its work. (OUT)

## **Take Stories**

### ***Take 1: (SUPER) LANTERN FESTIVAL***

(SLUG) Chinese people prepare for Lantern Festival

(LEAD IN) The popular Lantern festival in China is celebrated on the 15th day of the first lunar month to mark the closing of Chinese New Year festivities. Though this year's Lantern Festival is still 3 days away, people across the country have already got into the spirit of things.

(TAKE VIDEO) As a wish for peace and prosperity for the coming year, colorful and lively lanterns shows are being held everywhere across the nation. In Shanghai, and the city of Jining, in east China's Shandong Province, visitors can enjoy a huge variety of fancy lanterns. In Lianping of south China's Guangdong province, as well as fancy lanterns, calligraphic works, paper cuttings, folk paintings and many other traditional Hakka arts and crafts are also being presented. (OUT)

***Take 2: (SUPER) UN SC PRESIDENCY***

(SLUG) UN Security Council to focus on Africa

(LEAD IN) Wars in Africa will command the attention of the United Nations Security Council this month. But the 15-member body will also closely track events in Iraq and the Middle East.

(TAKE VIDEO) The comments come from China's permanent representative to the UN Wang Guangya, who is the UN Security Council president for February. Wang promises fluid communication between Security Council members.

(BITE ID) WANG GUANGYA China's permanent representative to the UN

(SOUNDBITE) (E) "I have invited you today, ... a presidency as accessible as possible." (OUT)

***Take 3: (SUPER) TRAFFIC ACCIDENT***

(SLUG) Traffic accident kills two Chinese in Jordan

(LEAD IN) Now to Jordan ... where two Chinese workers have been killed and 18 others injured in a traffic accident in the southern part of the country.

(TAKE MAP) Among the 18 injured women, six are in critical condition. The accident occurred on Wednesday. The twenty Chinese women were heading back to their residence in a commuter bus after finishing work at a clothes factory. Authorities say a freight truck ran into the bus, killing the driver and two Chinese women on the spot. The injured were sent to a nearby hospital for emergency treatment. (OUT)



***Take 4: (SUPER) TRADE DISPUTE***

(SLUG) China urges Russia to end seizures of Chinese goods

(LEAD IN) In other news ... China is urging Russia to stop the confiscation of goods from Chinese businesspeople in Moscow that have been accused by the Russian Interior Ministry of tariff evasion. The situation began escalating last Tuesday, and came to a head on Friday.

(TAKE VIDEO) The Chinese Embassy in Moscow issued a statement calling for the protection of Chinese business people's interests in Russia on Saturday. The Chinese Embassy urged Russia to deal with the issue within a legal framework. And Russia has been asked not to sell or auction any of the confiscated goods wantonly. Chinese diplomats say most of the goods confiscated by the Russian Interior Ministry in recent days had already been approved by Russian customs authorities to enter the country.

(OUT)

***Take 5: (SUPER) NEW BOTANICAL GARDEN***

(SLUG) Beijing to expand on State Botanical Garden

(LEAD IN) And finally ... Beijing's Botanical Garden, situated at the foot of Fragrance Hill in the western suburbs of the capital, is perhaps the local residents' number one choice for weekend excursions. The garden will soon be expanded and upgraded into a state-level research center, offering even more sites of interest for visitors.

(TAKE VIDEO) More than two million visitors come to the Beijing Botanical Gardens every year. They are seeking a closer view of the garden's rich collection of sub-tropical plants, as well as a pleasant natural landscape to enjoy. But less well known is another botanical garden to the south of the more familiar wonderland. This less frequented garden is the home of the research center for the Botany Institute of Chinese Academy of Sciences. The two gardens will be incorporated into a larger state-level botanical research base. Regulators say the whole expansion project will take up to 16 years to complete. But Beijing residents and overseas visitors will definitely see the garden take on a new look by the time Beijing hosts the 2008 Olympic Games. (OUT)

***Take 6: (SUPER) AIRFARE REFORM***

(SLUG) More flexibility for China's airfares

(LEAD IN) China's National Development and Reform Commission released a Domestic Airfare Price Reform Plan Thursday...aimed at addressing the needs of a changing aviation market.

(TAKE VIDEO) Domestic airlines can adjust their airfares according to market conditions and targets the impending competition from foreign companies. Prices must be no higher than 25 percent and no lower than 45 percent of the guideline. Airlines should submit their price adjustment applications to the Civil Aviation Administration of China and the reform commission for approval, instead of automatically offering unauthorized discounts. (OUT)

## **Writer & Reporter Stories**

### ***Story 1: (SUPER) BIRD FLU IN ASIA***

(SLUG) Asian countries step up bird flu prevention

(LEAD IN) Bird flu continues to spread in many South East Asian countries, and as yet unaffected areas are going to great lengths to keep their own poultry industries and populations free of the disease. [WRITER] has a look at the situation as it stands.

(VOICE OVER) According to the latest official statistics, released on Saturday, four more Thai provinces have been declared as bird flu control zones, raising the number of affected provinces to 33. Meanwhile, Thailand's Health Ministry announced another two suspected bird flu infected patients. The number of suspected bird flu patients in the country is now 14, while confirmed cases stayed level at three as of Friday. In Vietnam, Prime Minister Phan Van Khai urged all bird flu-hit cities and provinces in the country to kill poultry rapidly and ban the transport and trade of fowls. So far, bird flu has hit 44 out of 64 provinces in Vietnam. In Indonesia, to cope with the fast spreading disease, the government has quickly adopted anti-bird flu measures and called for all nationals to act against the disease. The Japanese government, meanwhile, has decided to establish a suspected case reporting system. Though Singapore, Myanmar and Malaysia still remain clear of the disease, they all have taken precautions to keep the virus from crossing their borders. The World Health Organization called on affected countries to speed up poultry culls in bird flu hit areas, and stressed the importance of compensating farmers who suffer financially from the loss of their flocks. The organization, at the same time, appealed to the international community to provide financial assistance to disease stricken countries to ensure the disease is kept well under control. [WRITER], CCTV.

***Story 2: (SUPER) FINANCIAL DERIVATIVES***

(SLUG) China issues rules on financial derivatives

(LEAD IN) Welcome back. And in economic news, China's Banking Regulatory Commission today released new rules on the operation of financial derivatives. They are the country's first specialized regulations governing financial derivatives. [WRITER] has more.

(VOICE OVER) The rules will take effect this March and stipulates accessing requirements for a financial institution to operate such products. Financial derivatives include futures, options, and forward exchange transactions.

(BITE ID) LI FUAN, Dept. Deputy Director China Banking Regulatory Commission

(SOUNDBITE) (CH) "Financial derivatives carry high risks. The move aims mainly to tighten the risk control in the sector. "

(VOICE OVER) Currently, stipulations concerning financial derivatives are scattered in the financial industry. Some analysts say that less control will worsen further the high-risk market of financial derivatives. [WRITER], CCTV.

***Story 3: (SUPER) SIX-PARTY TALKS***

(SLUG) China calls for all out efforts on DPRK talks

(LEAD IN) The Chinese Vice Foreign Minister has called on all parties concerned to make unremitting efforts to keep the six-party talks going, despite the difficulties which may arise. [DIRECTOR] has the story.

(VOICE OVER) Dai Bingguo said dialogue is the best way to resolve the DPRK nuclear issue. He said all parties involved are aware that this is a complicated issue which will take a long time to solve. He encouraged all parties involved and the international community to be patient and hold reasonable and practical expectations.

(BITE ID) DAI BINGGUO Chinese Vice Foreign Minister

(SOUNDBITE) (CH) “As long as all parties involved make unremitting efforts, we are hopeful that the issue can be solved peacefully through dialogue.”

(VOICE OVER) Dai Bingguo said that since the first round of six-way talks, China has maintained close contact and consultation with the parties involved to keep the dialogue process going. He said all sides had put in a great deal of effort to make the second round of talks a success. He said they had demonstrated an open attitude and were willing to include any relevant issues. The six countries have already started exchanging ideas on possible discussion topics. Dai Bingguo said he thinks the second round of talks could achieve substantial progress. The first round of six-party talks on the DPRK nuclear issue was held in Beijing on August 27th and closed on August 29th. [DIRECTOR], CCTV.

***Story 4: (SUPER) BUNGALOW FIRE***

(SLUG) Bungalow fire kills 39 in Zhejiang

(LEAD IN) In another deadly blaze in China ... at least 39 people were killed and 4 others injured in a fire that suddenly engulfed a makeshift bungalow on Sunday afternoon. The fire occurred not far from Haining City in east China's Zhejiang Province. Preliminary investigation shows that all of the victims are women. The oldest was 84. [Foreign Expert] has more.

(VOICE OVER) The straw-made bungalow in Wufeng village was used by local elders to worship. Dozens of villagers were worshipping inside the makeshift building when the fire broke out. It took only half an hour to put out the blaze. But even 30 minutes was too late for those inside. Some local witnesses said the seniors from the villagers caught in the blaze has usually burned sacrificial offerings during their worshipping activities. Negligence may have led to the fire that swept through the bungalow. But the exact cause of the accident is still under investigation. The fire caught the eastern province by surprise. The provincial government quickly dispatched a task force to the village, responsible for the rescue work, as well as the follow-up investigation. The governor of Zhejiang Province, Lu Zushan, is heading the task force. The four injured in the blaze have all been hospitalized. Doctors say they are all in stable condition, and are out of life-threatening danger. [Foreign Expert], CCTV.

***Story 5: (SUPER) MUSLIM FESTIVAL***

(SLUG) Muslims celebrate Kurban Bayami

(LEAD IN) Returning to our earlier story... although the tragedy in Saudi Arabia has overshadowed the climax of the Hajj, Muslims worldwide on Sunday began celebrating the Kurban Bayami. It's also called the Festival of Sacrifice and goes for the next three days. Here in China, Muslims celebrated at a feast organized by China's Islamic Association in the capital Beijing. Our reporter [REPORTER] was there, and has the following story.

(VOICE OVER) The Kurban Bayami began on Sunday. Over a billion Muslims worldwide will celebrate over the next three days. Here, diplomats from 30 Arab and Muslim countries gather at a hotel in Beijing. The feast is the biggest celebration on the Islamic calendar. The feast begins with a prayer. They call for peace and goodwill amongst all people, and for an end to war, especially in Islamic countries affected by conflict.

(BITE ID) CHEN GUANGYUAN, Chairman China Islamic Association

(SOUNDBITE) (C) "This festival honors Allah. We pray for peace throughout the world, and among all people. And we pray for happiness for all mankind."

(BITE ID) DR. FEREDOUN VERDINEJAD, Ambassador Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

(SOUNDBITE) (E) "We are as Muslim want from Allah and pray for them that freedom and peace and security for all people inside Palestine and Islam countries. We hope to have peaceful relation and peaceful life for them."

(VOICE OVER) According to tradition, Kurban is celebrated 70 days after the end of the Moslem fast in the holy month of Ramadan. Kurban takes place on the tenth



day of the 12th month in the Islamic calendar. It coincides with the pilgrimage to Islam's holiest shrines, and the end of the Hajj in Saudi Arabia. This year, the China Islamic Association arranged for over 4,000 pilgrims to make the trip to Mecca.

(STAND UP ID) [REPORTER] Beijing

(STAND UP) "The Arab name of the holiday has some connection with the legend about Abraham's offering. Abraham, whom Moslems consider to be the first monotheism preacher, was ready to offer his son Ismail in sacrifice. However, at the last moment the angel replaced Ismail by a sacrificial animal, and the holiday was thus established to commemorate this."

(VOICE OVER) According to tradition, the festival begins with prayer, and the slaughter of an animal in memory of Abraham's sacrifice. After this, Muslims worldwide enjoy a day of eating and entertainment. Dance... Song... and traditional sports are all part of the celebration. [REPORTER], CCTV.

## **1200 CCTV NEWS POST-RELAUNCH**

### **Copy story**

#### ***Copy 1: [NO SUPER]***

(SLUG) EU drops Chinese import ban

(LEAD IN) The European Union has formally announced the lifting of a ban on selected exports of China's animal by-products. The banned goods include shrimp, honey, royal jelly, rabbit meat and fresh-water fish. It was imposed back in January 2002 after traces of veterinary medicines were found in some exports to Europe. But poultry is still forbidden due to the outbreak of bird flu in Asia. EU representatives said the ban was lifted after China demonstrated significant improvements in food hygiene standards. In the future, goods will be checked and certified in China to make sure they comply with EU standards before being exported. (OUT)

## **Take Stories**

### ***Take 1: (SUPER) WORLD COURT RULING***

(SLUG) Israeli FM: Israel won't accept ruling

(LEAD IN) Israel's foreign minister Silvan Shalom says his government won't accept next month's ruling by the World Court on the legality of its West Bank separation barrier.

(TAKE VIDEO) Following talks at the White House on Friday with US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Shalom pressed for US support to block any UN action against the Jewish state. He believes America, amongst others, will oppose any UN resolution. The International Court of Justice, also known as the World Court, will render its judgment in a public hearing on July 9. (OUT)

***Take 2: (SUPER) AFGHAN HOSPITAL***

(SLUG) Death toll in hospital collapse reaches 8

(LEAD IN) Still in Afghanistan, the death toll from a hospital collapse in Kabul has risen to eight after the discovery of six more bodies.

(TAKE VIDEO) The main wing of the Jamhuriat hospital suddenly caved in during construction on Monday afternoon. The project was assisted by China, and two Chinese workers were injured in the accident. More than 40 Afghans were buried in the wreckage, and about half of them have been rescued from the ruins. No patients or hospital staff were on-site at the time. NATO peacekeeping soldiers sealed the area on Monday evening to allow rescuers to clear the ruins and continue searching for survivors.

(OUT)

***Take 3: (SUPER) IRAQ HOSTAGES***

(SLUG) Militants kill 2 Pakistani hostages

(LEAD IN) Pakistan has denounced the killing of two of its nationals by militants in Iraq as a crime against humanity and Islam. The Foreign Ministry says the killings have devastated the families of the victims and the nation.

(TAKE VIDEO) The comment came after the pan-Arab television station Al-Jazeera reported receiving a video in which militants in Iraq say they have killed two Pakistani contractors who disappeared last week. Their Iraqi driver was released. Pakistan had identified the two men as workers for the Kuwaiti branch of the Saudi group, Al Tamimi. (OUT)

***Take 4: (SUPER) China's retail sales boost***

(LEAD IN) To the economy now, and the Chinese commodity market ran smoothly in the first half of 2004, recording its highest growth since 1997. This is according to a report issued by the Ministry of Commerce on Wednesday.

(TAKE VIDEO) The country's annual retail sales are expected to exceed 605 billion US dollars this year, up more than 10.5 percent year-on-year. In the first six months of the year, retail sales reached 305 billion US dollars, an increase of almost 13 percent year on year. The catering industry witnessed more than 24 percent growth in sales in the first six months, hitting 41 billion US dollars. The report predicted that sales of raw materials and production machinery will exceed the 12 hundred billion US dollar mark this year, that's up over 15 percent year-on-year, and prices are expected to rise by about 8 percent. (OUT)

(GRAPHIC) Graphic: China's Retail Sector 2004 Annual retail sales: expected to exceed US\$605 bln up 10.5% y-o-y H1 retail sales: US\$305 bln up 12.8% y-o-y H1 Catering industry sales: US\$41 bln up 24.5% y-o-y Sales of raw materials and production equipment expected to exceed US\$1,200 bln, up 15% y-o-y. Prices expected to increase by 8% Source: Ministry of Commerce

***Take 5: (SUPER) MEDICAL TRIALS***

(SLUG) China works on revised SARS treatment

(LEAD IN) Severe acute respiratory syndrome or SARS may have been contained since its last outbreak on the Chinese mainland four months ago, but China hasn't relaxed its vigilance. SARS expert Zhong Nanshan announced that the country is working to revise its SARS treatment.

(TAKE VIDEO) According to Zhong, 36 people have already undergone medical trials. Out of 18 subjects who received smaller doses, none have exhibited any side effects so far. Zhong says more revisions will be made to make the treatment more practical. The revised version of the plan is expected to be finalized this month. (OUT)

***Take 6: (SUPER) LAW-MAKERS EXCHANGE***

(SLUG) US Senator delegation visits Beijing

(LEAD IN) Hello and welcome to this edition of CCTV news. I'm [Anchor]. A delegation of US Senators is in China on an 8-day visit to activate an exchange mechanism between the two countries' law-making bodies. China's top legislator Wu Bangguo received the delegation Monday. He reviewed the status of Sino-US relations and reiterated China's stance on the Taiwan issue and Hong Kong's political reform.

(TAKE VIDEO) Wu said the mechanism is beneficial to enhancing ties between the two law-making bodies. He stressed that the Taiwan question is the most sensitive issue in Sino-US relations, and that China would never tolerate Taiwan independence. Wu Bangguo expressed the hope that the US side would observe the three Sino-US joint communiqués, and stop sending what he called "wrong signals" to Taiwan's independence forces. Wu also made remarks about Hong Kong's ongoing political reform. He said the NPC Standing Committee's interpretation of the region's rules of suffrage were consistent with China's Constitution and the Basic Law. The US delegation is led by Ted Stevens, acting president of the US Senate. He said the US side highly values the formal start-up of the exchange mechanism between the two bodies. He also reiterated Washington's adherence to the one-China policy. (OUT)



## **Writer & Reporter Stories**

### ***Story 1: (SUPER) RURAL SHORTFALL***

(SLUG) Land acquisition hurts grain harvest

(LEAD IN) Grain production in China has dwindled to a record low. The unregulated acquisition of rural land has helped lead a worrying decline, creating a major headache for the government. As [REPORTER] finds out, the country's top legislators are considering a report from an inspection team just returned from the countryside.

(VOICE OVER) China's farmland has been cut by well over six million hectares, reaching a record low. And grain production decreased by ten billion kilograms. The figure was reported to the NPC Standing Committee by its vice chairman Sheng Huaren. He has just returned from an inspection tour of 15 provinces. He said that requisition of farmland for non-agricultural purposes is rampant. Efforts to curb the trend are underway.

(BITE ID) SHENG HUAREN, Vice Chairman NPC Standing Committee

(SOUNDBITE) (C) “ In recent months, governments at various levels have halted the rapid increase of the establishment of development zones. Some 3763 planned development zones were cancelled, returning more than 1600 square kilometres of land. “

(VOICE OVER) He suggested tougher control on official approval of land use. As for grain production, he said that farmers' enthusiasm is slowly picking up due to more government subsidies. This year, the central government will boost agricultural spending by 30 billion yuan. However, this cannot make up the widening gap between grain demand and supply due to land losses and inefficient financial aid.

(BITE ID) SHENG HUAREN, Vice Chairman NPC Standing Committee

(SOUNDBITE) (C) “ There are many problems concerning financial aid to the farmers. The most prominent one is insufficient loans. This has become a major factor hampering economic development in rural areas.”

(VOICE OVER) In some areas, financial institutions are reluctant to give loans to farmers due to lack of agriculture insurance. Sheng Huaren said the problems are imposing great challenges, especially for a country with a rural population of 768 million. [REPORTER], CCTV.

***Story 2: (SUPER) SADDAM IN COURT***

(SLUG) Saddam calls his hearing “theater”

(LEAD IN) Welcome to CCTV News. I’m [Anchor] in Beijing. Sports news coming up later in the program. But we begin in Iraq, where reaction by Iraqis to their former president’s appearance in court has ranged from relief, to scorn and anger. Saddam Hussein faces seven charges that may lead to formal indictment for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. But he’s rejected all accusations - instead, pointing the finger of blame at US President W. Bush, who he calls the “real criminal”. Meanwhile, the US military has released several new photographs, detailing Saddam’s arrival and departure from the court hearing. [WRITER] has the details.

(VOICE OVER) Saddam arrived handcuffed and in chains at a courtroom at Camp Victory that was once one of his own palaces. But although being deposed and captive, the former Iraqi President showed he hasn’t lost his defiance. In Thursday’s hearing, Saddam declared himself the “President of Iraq” and rejected all the charges. He called the whole hearing “theater”. Saddam then pointed the finger at US President George W. Bush, describing him as the “real criminal”, whose forces invaded Iraq 15 months ago. 67-year-old Saddam appeared thinner, with a trimmed beard that had mostly turned grey. The pictures are the first footage of the ousted Iraqi leader since he was captured in December. Meanwhile, hundreds of Iraqis, mainly Sunni, took to the streets in Samarra, north of Baghdad, in support of their former President. They protested the trial as “ridiculous”. And they’re also angry that the single judge in the court was named by the US-led coalition. Elsewhere in Baghdad, residents expressed mixed feelings after watching the hearing on television.

(BITE ID) Baghdad Resident

(SOUNDBITE) (Arabic) “We don’t accept this! The Iraqi President is our favorite President. he has been in power for 36 years! There was security and stability during his rule.”

(BITE ID) Baghdad Resident

(SOUNDBITE) (Arabic) “This is what we wanted! We wanted this court! Saddam Hussein deserves the ultimate verdict because what he did to the Iraqis is not small thing, and the evidence is there with the mass graves.”

(VOICE OVER) The hearing came three days after the US handed sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government. The former Iraqi leader is no longer a prisoner of war and has been transferred from US to Iraqi legal custody. He is still held by US troops, and his trial is not expected till 2005. [WRITER], CCTV.

### ***Story 3: (SUPER) PARTY NOMINATIONS***

(SLUG) Democrats to nominate candidates

(LEAD IN) With US elections less than a hundred days away, the Democratic Party opened its national convention in Boston on Monday to formally nominate its presidential and vice presidential candidates. In his speech to the opening session, former Vice President Al Gore called for a united party to put Senator John Kerry in the White House. [DIRECTOR] takes a closer look.

(VOICE OVER) The four-day convention is mainly a promotion show by Democrats, who aim to help American voters get to know senators John Kerry and John Edwards - both expected to be officially nominated on Wednesday. Party leaders are stressing unity and the need to topple Republican President George W. Bush. Al Gore reminded Democrats of Bush's victory in the disputed Florida election in 2000, and mobilized them to help Democrat candidates score a victory in the November elections.

(BITE ID) AL GORE Fmr. US Vice-President

(SOUNDBITE) (E) "For those of you who felt disappointed or angry with the outcome in 2000, I want you to remember all of those feelings, but then I want you to do with them what I have done, focus them fully and completely on putting John Kerry and Jon Edwards in the White House in 2004 so we can have a new direction in America."

(VOICE OVER) To gain support from undecided voters, Democrat leaders highlighted Kerry's proposals to create jobs, provide affordable health care and rebuild foreign alliances. They also attacked Bush's record in boosting the economy or protecting Americans from terrorist threats. Democrats are using the Boston gathering to showcase the life of the decorated Vietnam War veteran, which they hope will polish his credentials as a decisive leader and soften the image of a sometimes wooden campaigner. A recent

public opinion poll shows Kerry with 47 percent of public support and Bush at 46 percent. Media projections expect the Democrats' convention to bring a five to seven percent boost in support for Kerry. [DIRECTOR], CCTV.

***Story 4: (SUPER) SINO-ROK EXCHANGE***

(SLUG) Chinese youth wrap up visit to ROK

(LEAD IN) Two hundred young Chinese have completed a ten-day visit to South Korea aimed at promoting understanding and harmony between the youth of the two countries. They say their knowledge of Korean culture and society has greatly improved after the visit. [WRITER] has this story.

(VOICE OVER) During their stay in South Korea, the Chinese young guests paid a visit to several major cities of the country and had a look around some of its renowned enterprises. But what they valued most was the opportunity to mingle with their Korean counterparts.

(BITE ID) Member of Chinese Youth Delegation

(SOUNDBITE) (Chinese) “Throughout our visit here, young South Korean friends were in our company. What impressed me most was their hospitality and remarkable professionalism, reflected by their perfect organization of the whole event.”

(VOICE OVER) The two governments are planning more activities to further enhance exchanges between the younger generations.

(BITE ID) HU WEI Head of Chinese Youth Delegation

(SOUNDBITE) (Chinese) “We have agreed to set up an inter-governmental director-level consulting mechanism to strengthen and broaden exchanges between the youths of the two countries. “

(VOICE OVER) According to the plan agreed by both governments, another three hundred Chinese young people will be able to visit South Korea later this year. [WRITER], CCTV.

***Story 5: (SUPER) MIGRANT WORKERS***

(SLUG) Gov't urged to protect migrant workers

(LEAD IN) Tight restrictions once made it nearly impossible for Chinese people to move around their country. But the opening-up policy in the past two decades has led to more and more people from rural areas flowing into big cities looking for jobs. What prospects do these farm-workers face in the highly competitive environment? On World Population Day, our reporter [REPORTER] seeks the answers.

(VOICE OVER) This is one of the largest job markets in downtown Beijing. Everyday, hundreds of migrant workers gather here to look for jobs. They come from all parts of China. Many bring all their belongings so that they can go to work the moment they get picked up by an employer. 18-year old Zhang Fangzhou is one of them.

(BITE ID) ZHANG FANGZHOU Migrant Worker

(SOUNDBITE) (CH) "I'm from Gansu Province. I didn't finish middle school. I came to Beijing because it's the capital and I think there will be lots of chances here. I want to broaden my view and earn more money."

(VOICE OVER) Zhang is not the only one looking for a better life. Of the 200 million surplus farmers in China, over half have fled to big cities like Beijing and Shanghai. They usually end up being waiters, chefs, courier boys, drivers and construction workers. However, a lack of education and personal connections make these workers vulnerable to unfair treatment.

(BITE ID) Migrant Worker

(SOUNDBITE) (C) "Yesterday, when I was looking for a job, a local man came and kicked me. I don't know why, but I dare not say anything. A month ago, I worked on a construction site for 6 days. But the sub-contractor ran away and didn't pay me. I asked



the boss, and he said it was none of his business. Then I went to the local labor authorities, and they said you have to first file a complaint to the court and wait, so I gave up.”

(VOICE OVER) Experts say the government should do more to help these people.

(BITE ID) DUAN CHENGRONG, Prof. China Renmin University

(SOUNDBITE) “Millions of migrant workers are competing for jobs in cities. They cannot say no to unfair treatment if they still want the job. We cannot expect migrant workers to fight for themselves. It is the government’s responsibility to supervise the job market, monitor employers and offer legal protection to these less advantaged workers.”

(VOICE OVER) But at present, many employers pay less to migrant workers than to local workers doing the same job. Most migrant workers are not covered by any kind of insurance. The day they get fired is the day they lose everything in the city.

(STAND UP ID) [REPORTER] CCTV reporter

(STAND UP) “In the search for a better life, these migrant workers travel thousands of kilometers from their hometowns for jobs. As China presses ahead with its modernization drive, more and more rural farmers are coming to cities, searching for opportunities. But how these farmers are integrated into urban life, and how their interests and rights are protected, will significantly impact the stability and prosperity of modern China.” [REPORTER], CCTV.

**1200 CCTV NEWS PRE-RELAUNCH (SET 2)**

**Copy Story**

***Copy 1:(SUPER) PRELUDE TO NEW TALKS***

(SLUG) Seoul, Pyongyang agree to military talks

(LEAD IN) The Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have agreed to hold military talks at the earliest possible date. The talks aim to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula. But the exact date and site of the talks have not been reached yet. The ROK Yonhap News Agency is reporting that delegations from both sides have clinched a six-point agreement after overnight negotiations in Seoul. This comes during the 13th Inter-Korean Ministerial Meeting on Friday. The two sides also agreed to make the February 25th six-way talks on nuclear issue productive, and to solve the issue peacefully. (OUT)

## **Take Stories**

### ***Take 1: (SUPER) FLU CONTROLLABLE***

(SLUG) Chinese govt. confident of bird flu controls

(LEAD IN) Hello, and welcome to CCTV News. I'm [ANCHOR], in Beijing. Chinese President Hu Jintao, who is in Cairo on a state visit, has stated his government's confidence in authorities' ability to control bird flu. He made the remarks while meeting media on Saturday in Cairo.

(TAKE GRAPHICS) Hu Jintao says the government has taken a series of measures to control the bird flu in China. He stressed the government has the capability to solve the problem and prevent transfer from animals to persons. He promised that the government will to do its utmost to protect people's health. (OUT)

***Take 2: [NO SUPER]***

(SLUG) Kremlin says its anti-war stance is vindicated

(LEAD IN) Observing all the criticisms being fired at the suspected intelligence failure by the US and British governments, Russia says its opposition to war in Iraq is vindicated. A senior Russian diplomat added that the work weapons inspectors have accomplished so far in Iraq only contributes to the justification of his country's anti-war stance.

(TAKE SOUND-BITE)

(BITE ID) YURI FEDOTOV Russian Deputy Foreign Minister

(SOUNDBITE) (Russian) "The conclusions that the ISG has come to are the same that UNMOVIC came to before the start of the war. It is therefore a justification of the position Russia takes now and took before the war, that we should solve the problem by means of inspection and not go down the road of war." (OUT)

***Take 3: (SUPER) AL-SISTANI***

(SLUG) Iraq's top cleric reportedly survives assassination attempt

(LEAD IN) In Iraq now ... there have been conflicting reports on an assassination attempt involving one of the country's most powerful Shiite Muslim clerics, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

(TAKE VIDEO) (File in) Arab media reported the assassination attempt on al-Sistani. But details on the alleged incident varied widely. The Arabic TV station Al-Jazeera has reported that unidentified gunmen fired on the Ayatollah on Thursday morning. However, the bodyguards of al-Sistani and Iraq's interim Governing Council have denied there was such an attempt on his life. Meanwhile, al-Sistani's associates have described him as being in good health. (FILE OUT)

The US-led coalition also said they had no information about an attack on al-Sistani. Al-Sistani is arguably Iraq's top Shiite cleric -- and one of the top three fighting for leadership of Shiite power in post-Saddam Iraq. (OUT)

***Take 4: (SUPER) COCKLE DEATHS***

(SLUG) Death toll of cockle hunters in England rises to 19

(LEAD IN) In England, another body, whose identity remains unconfirmed, was found on Friday off the country's northwest coast, bringing the death toll of shell hunters to 19.

(TAKE VIDEO) The number of the dead cockle pickers, who were caught by racing tides on Thursday night, is feared to further increase as the tide at Morecombe Bay retreats and rescue operations continue. All the victims are thought to be Chinese - 16 men and 2 women. Another 14 survivors have been rescued or have walked to safety and are gathered at a local community center. Chinese Deputy Consul General in Manchester, Wu Yangyu, told China's *Xinhua* News Agency that none of the survivors, bar one female Chinese student, have passports or any other valid documents. Morecombe Bay, is notoriously dangerous for its fast rising tides and quick sands. (OUT)

***Take 5: (SUPER) EU-CHINA***

(SLUG) Second stage of EU support for China's WTO accession

(LEAD IN) The second stage of the Program For European Union Support For China's Accession To the World Trade Organization starts on Sunday. The program is designed to specifically help China fulfill its commitments to the global trade body.

(TAKE VIDEO) The program is supported by a 20 million euro fund, jointly paid by the European Union and China. China's Ministry of Commerce will be responsible for the implementation of the program which includes projects in helping China's reform its customs and import and export systems. It will also help the Chinese government draft WTO-related regulations, and send officers and business representatives for training in Europe. The EU ambassador in China said the second stage of the program will be more focused on substantive projects. (OUT)

***Take 6: (SUPER) SPACE PLANS***

(SLUG) China to launch Probe No. 2 into orbit

(LEAD IN) China plans to send the second of the “Double Star” satellites, known as Probe No. 2, into orbit in July this year. The announcement comes after Probe No.1 celebrated its sixty-third day in orbit.

(TAKE VIDEO) Chief Engineer of the programme Zhang Yongwei said all the instruments for the satellite have been installed on the launch platform. Probe No.2 will orbit the North and South poles and explore, as yet, unmapped areas of the Earth’s magnetic field. The two probes are part of China’s “Double Star” joint space programme with the European Space Agency. Sino-European space co-operation made a huge leap forward last year, with the launch of the first of their two scientific satellites. (OUT)



## **Writer & Reporter Stories**

### ***Story 1: (SUPER) REBUILD LIBERIA***

(SLUG) UN holds donors conference on Liberia's reconstruction

(LEAD IN) Now to New York ... where a two-day donors conference to address Liberia's reconstruction needs has opened at the United Nations. The gathering got underway on Thursday with technical discussions. The UN and the US are asking rich nations for nearly 500 million US dollars to put Liberia firmly on road to peace, after nearly two decades of civil war. [DIRECTOR] has the story.

(VOICE OVER) Bringing together a record number of participants on the issue, delegates are seeking to find ways to help Liberia in its fragile transition from relief to recovery. And participants are calling for the process to be expedited.

(BITE ID) MARK MALLOCH BROWN, Chairman Donors Conference on Internal Reconstruction of Liberia

(SOUNDBITE) (E) "It's clear that the next time that we have to respond to emerging transition situations, resources need to be delivered much sooner."

(VOICE OVER) This aim is much needed for Liberia. The west African nation has suffered 14 years of conflict and has been trying to rebuild itself after President Charles Taylor's exile in August. Taylor's departure has cleared the way for a power-sharing deal between the government and rebels. But the obstacles to this arrangement are still formidable since Liberia's main rebel movement has now splintered. Disarming the soldiers and integrating them back into society has been raised as potential solutions.

(BITE ID) ANDREW NATSIOS, US Administrator Donors Conference on Internal Reconstruction of Liberia

(SOUNDBITE) (E) “ Reintegration is a complex process, without a clear conclusion. At best, reintegration programs merge into successful community construction. “

(VOICE OVER) But the integration programs will come with a big price. A new joint assessment by the World Bank and the UN estimates some 488 million US dollars are needed to meet Liberia’s most urgent needs over the next two years. [DIRECTOR], CCTV.

***Story 2: (SUPER) INTELLIGENCE REPORT***

(SLUG) Bush forms commission to investigate Iraq intelligence

(LEAD IN) US President George W. Bush has established a bi-partisan commission to investigate failures in intelligence used to justify the Iraq war. It will report back in March of 2005. But US Secretary of State Colin Powell said the government will not apologize for the alleged intelligence failures. [WRITER] has the story.

(BITE ID) GEORGE W. BUSH US President

(SOUNDBITE) “Today, by executive order, I am creating an independent commission, chaired by Governor and former Senator Chuck Robb, Judge Laurence Silberman, to look at American intelligence capabilities, especially our intelligence about weapons of mass destruction.”

(VOICE OVER) Bush said his government is determined to ensure American intelligence is “as accurate as possible for every challenge in the future”. Bush is scrambling to limit the political fallout from former chief US weapons inspector David Kay’s revelations that almost all the pre-war intelligence about Iraq’s alleged unconventional weapons was wrong. Colin Powell joined the president in defending his government’s case against Iraq.

(BITE ID) COLIN POWELL US Secretary of State

(SOUNDBITE) “I don’t think any apologies are necessary. As director Tenet said yesterday, when he prepared the intelligence estimate that was presented to the American Congress in the fall of 2002, it represented a solid body of advice, a solid body of information that had been collected by analysts and other sources... “

(VOICE OVER) The US president gave the commission until the end of March, 2005, to report back, meaning the results of the investigation will not be known until after the November election. [WRITER], CCTV

***Story 3: (SUPER) NPC PREVIEW***

(SLUG) Wen Jiabao to deliver first gov't work report

(LEAD IN) In two days, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao will deliver his annual government work report to the National People's Congress. This will be his first since stepping into China's top government post one year ago. The Chinese leader is expected to use the occasion to highlight the new government's efforts to address the daily concerns of ordinary people. [WRITER] has more on the story.

(VOICE OVER) For the past twelve months, the new generation of Chinese leaders have impressed observers with unprecedented care for the well-being citizens.

(BITE ID) NORMAN BOTTORF APTN China

(SOUNDBITE) (English) " It was a difficult year for the leaders. In general, I think they handled very well."

(VOICE OVER) The difficult year began when the SARS outbreak erupted. Government officials spared no efforts to fight the SARS virus, making public safety the top priority. Meanwhile, migrant workers' rights were highlighted as the State Council abolished the unpopular system of detention and repatriation. Addressing the plight of farmers, the government helped secure back pay from local employers. And in a change of attitude toward AIDS, the premier shook hands with AIDS patients. The past year also saw the new government's firm determination to tackle an old problem - corruption. A total of thirteen ministerial and provincial-level officials were punished for graft and bribery. Commenting on the new government's image, this Beijing resident says it's practical and transparent. And this one says she's impressed by the government's populist approach to the life of ordinary people. [WRITER], CCTV

***Story 4: (SUPER) SALON DU LIVRE***

(SLUG) Chinese books honored at major French fair

(LEAD IN) France's most important book fair has kicked off in the capital. The annual "Salon du Livre" is known as much for the number and diversity of the exhibits, as for its great success with the public. Each year, the salon focuses on a different country. This year, it's China. Here's [ZHUBIAN] with the details.

(VOICE OVER) Chinese representatives attending the fair have brought with them about two thousand Chinese titles, selected from books published in the country over recent years. Among those selected, 70 have been translated into French and will be published in France with donations from China. The books fall into three categories -- "Old China, Colorful China and Modern China" -- and are expected to give French readers a comprehensive look at Chinese culture. China's ambassador to France spoke highly of the book fair and thanked France for inviting China to be this year's focus.

(BITE ID) ZHAO JINJUN Chinese Ambassador to France

(SOUNDBITE) (Chinese) "It's a significant literary gathering in France. This is the first time China has been chosen as the country of honor. It's also the first time Chinese literature has been made the theme of the great event. So it's really a great honor for us."

(VOICE OVER) French President Jacques Chirac also attended the event. He showed great interest in the Chinese exhibits. Along with senior officials from China's General Administration of Press and Publication and the Chinese ambassador to France, Chirac unveiled the Chinese books that will soon be published in his country. China's participation in the salon is part of the cultural activities of the "China Culture Year" in

France. It is expected to pave the way for Chinese books to enter the mainstream in France as well as other European countries. [ZHUBIAN], CCTV

***Story 5: (SUPER) SEMICONDUCTOR***

(SLUG) China to consult with US on semiconductor tax

(LEAD IN) Officials said Friday that China has agreed to consult with the United States over the alleged “discriminatory” value-added tax on imported semiconductor chips. The US filed case with the World Trade Organization on March 18th, charging that China is using its tax code to unfairly treat American semiconductor makers. [FOREIGN EXPERT] has more.

(VOICE OVER) China levies a 17 percent value-added tax on imported chips. Domestic producers also are subject to the tax but qualify for rebates of as much as 14 percent. Some US manufacturers claim this is discriminatory to foreign firms. Last Thursday, the US administration called China’s tax policy on chips “discriminative” to US chip manufacturers, and requested consultation with China at the WTO. China communicated with the US side via its delegation at the World Trade Organization. The two sides will decide detailed arrangements of the consultation after negotiation. Meanwhile, commenting on the case, WTO chief spokesman Keith Rockwell said China is a good member of the WTO, and this dispute would not have any negative effect on China’s good standing as a member. He said the close attention being paid to this case is simply because it’s the first time China has been charged since its entry to the WTO in 2001. Mr Rockwell said that with China ranking fifth on exports and sixth on imports in the world, it is not very surprising that China will have to face some trade disputes. He added that WTO members with similar trading volumes have faced charges like this on several occasions. The US, for example, has been charged 81 times, the European Union 48 times, and Japan 13 times. [FOREIGN EXPERT], CCTV



**1200 CCTV NEWS POST-RELAUNCH (SET 2)**

**Copy Story**

***Copy 1: [NO SUPER]***

(SLUG) Iraq welcomes new resolution

(LEAD IN) Iraq has welcomed the unanimous adoption of the new resolution. Iraq's representative told the UN Security Council that the presence of US-led forces relies on the request of the Iraqi government. Iraq also said it welcomed the assistance of any government willing to help with its reconstruction. (OUT)

## **Take Stories**

### ***Take 1: (SUPER) HEAVY RAIN***

(SLUG) Heavy rains raise river levels

(LEAD IN) Heavy rains may have brought a welcome end to high temperatures, but experts warn they've also swollen the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers to dangerously high levels.

(TAKE VIDEO) In the southwestern city of Chongqing, water levels in the Yangtze have risen to their highest this year. The local government has started its early-warning system, with 24-hour monitoring of major reservoirs and areas at risk of mud-rock flows. The high-water season has also been declared on the Yellow River, where flood-control authorities are carefully managing key dams like the Xiaolangdi Project.

(OUT)

***Take 2: (SUPER) CHEMICAL WEAPONS***

(SLUG) Chemical weapons found in Iraq

(LEAD IN) Meanwhile, Polish troops in Iraq have found artillery shells containing a deadly nerve agent. A spokesman said 17 Grad rockets and two mortar shells contained cyclosarin with US tests confirming that at least some testing positive for sarin gas.

(TAKE VIDEO) The threat of weapons of mass destruction possessed by Saddam Hussein's now toppled regime was the main justification used by Washington and its allies to go to war last year. But US-led occupying forces were only able to uncover a small amount of banned weaponry... until this Polish find. The army said they were most probably left-over from the 1980-1988 Iraq-Iran war. Iraq has admitted it produced cyclosarin munitions in the 1980s to fight Iran, but under UN resolutions was committed to destroying stocks and ceasing production after the 1991 Gulf War. (OUT)

***Take 3: (SUPER) ATTACK THREAT***

(SLUG) Militants threaten Muslim nations (LEAD IN) In related news... An Islamist militant group has threatened to attack Muslim countries that agree to Saudi Arabia's proposal to send troops to Iraq.

(TAKE VIDEO) The statement was posted on a website Thursday. The identity of the organization hasn't been verified, but it's believed to have a similar name to one al-Qaeda-linked group - the Islamic Tawhid - which, last week, threatened Italy and Australia if they refused to withdraw troops currently in Iraq. (OUT)

***Take 4: [NO SUPER]***

(SLUG) Chinese, US presidents discuss Taiwan

(LEAD IN) Hello and welcome to the news on CCTV International. I'm [ANCHOR] in Beijing. Chinese President Hu Jintao has spoken to US counterpart, George W. Bush, to discuss Sino-US relations and the Taiwan question.

(TAKE VIDEO) In a phone call, Hu reiterated China's position to never allow Taiwan's independence, expressing hopes to solve the problem peacefully. Bush emphasized that a strong and prosperous China would be beneficial to bilateral relations, which the US is working to maintain. He said he understands China's stance on Taiwan, pledging Washington's continued commitment to the One China policy. (OUT)

***Take 5: (SUPER) IRAN NUCLEAR***

(LEAD IN) Iran has resumed building centrifuges that Washington says are intended to enrich uranium to a weapons-grade level for use in atomic warheads. Iran's decision backtracks from a pledge made in October to the European Union's "big three" member states -- Britain, France and Germany -- to suspend all uranium enrichment-related activities.

(TAKE SOUNDBITE)

(BITE ID) KAMAL KHARAZZI Iranian Foreign Minister

(SOUNDBITE) (Farsi) "Based on our agreements in October, we have accepted suspending uranium enrichment and we are continuing that suspension based on our definition. We have not restarted enrichment. But we are not committed to our agreement in Brussels in October on halting building centrifuge parts because the three big European countries have failed to meet their commitments toward us. We said we could resume making centrifuges. We started building centrifuge parts at our factory after we took the decision." (OUT)

***Take 6: (SUPER) Beijing raises water prices***

(LEAD IN) The Beijing Municipal Government will again raise prices for water for industrial, urban and environmental purposes, while leaving prices for water used in agriculture unchanged. The new pricing system will come into effect on August the First.

(TAKE VIDEO) Households in Beijing will have to pay an additional 0.8 yuan for every cubic meter of water used, that's a 27-percent above current prices. The increase is 1.2 yuan for industrial consumers. Coupled with the pricing reform is a restrictive quota for corporate users. The price hike will only affect urban areas of Beijing, with the old system remaining unchanged in rural zones. (OUT)

## **Writer & Reporter Stories**

### ***Story 1: (SUPER) IRAQ RESOLUTION***

(SLUG) Unanimous approval for revised resolution

(LEAD IN) Following weeks of negotiations, the UN Security Council has unanimously endorsed a “sovereign interim government” in Iraq, and the formal transfer of sovereignty at the end of June. [WRITER] has more.

(VOICE OVER) France and Germany dropped their objections after the resolution included a last-minute compromise giving Iraqi leaders control over the activities of their own troops and a say on “sensitive offensive operations” by the multinational force - such as the controversial siege of Fallujah. But the measure stops short of granting the Iraqis a veto over major US-led military operations. It authorizes the US-led multinational force to remain in Iraq to help ensure security but gives the Iraqi government the right to ask the force to leave at any time. Meantime the Iraqi forces will operate under the authority of the interim government and will ultimately assume responsibility for maintaining stability in Iraq. The resolution also gives a timetable for the formation of an elected Iraqi transitional government by December 31, 2005. The unanimous endorsement was warmly received by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan

(BITE ID) KOFI ANNAN UN Secretary General

(SOUNDBITE) English “ I believe it is a genuine expression of the will of the international community led by the Security Council to come together again after last year’s divisions and to help the Iraqi people take charge of their own political destiny.”

(VOICE OVER) The resolution is expected to help patch up the deep divisions on Iraq, prompted by the US-led invasion which was opposed by major European nations and many other countries. [WRITER], CCTV



***Story 2: (SLUG) Nuclear Non-Proliferation***

(LEAD IN) As the third round of six-party talks comes under world scrutiny, fresh discussion of nuclear non-proliferation has emerged once again. [ANCHOR] takes a closer look at the broader issue at stake.

(VOICE OVER) (File in) Non-proliferation is an important part of international weaponry control and disarmament. It was initiated by the US-led developed countries. Its main target is the so-called axis of evil nations. In 1995, a US defense report targeted weapons of mass destruction as the greatest threat to the US. The Bush administration further stressed the importance of non-proliferation. After 9/11, counter-proliferation and terrorism became the two pillars of US foreign policy. In December 2002, the White House announced the well-known policy of preemptive attacks to prevent nuclear proliferation. In 2003, US president George W. Bush advocated that all countries should join to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology. (File out)

(VOICE OVER) China published a white paper on non-proliferation policy and measures in 2003. China believes the purpose of non-proliferation is to safeguard world peace and promote common development. But the goal should be achieved through peaceful means. [ANCHOR] CCTV.

***Story 3: (SUPER) CAR MARKET***

(SLUG) Auto market encounters cold winter

(LEAD IN) After a two-year boom, China's automobile market unexpectedly stalled in the second quarter of 2004. The soaring rise in car sales over the past two years has gone down from over 60 percent to less than 30 percent. Though various efforts have been made to revitalize the market, including massive price cuts, it seems consumers are still reluctant to commit to buying. Our reporter [REPORTER] takes a close look at what's happening in the market, and the reasons behind it.

(VOICE OVER) 37 degrees centigrade on a mid-summer's day in Beijing. It's the hottest time of the year in the capital. But Yayuncun automobile market, the largest in the city, is experiencing a cold winter, with no more than a dozen would-be car buyers browsing around inside.

(BITE ID) LAO MA Beijing citizen

(SOUNDBITE) (Chinese) "I'm just taking a look. Cars are already much cheaper. but...I'm just taking a look."

(VOICE OVER) Thousands of cars are quietly waiting in the complex for their new owners. And with few clients to attend to, the sales people are waiting even more quietly. Bulletins with announcement of price-cuts can be seen almost everywhere in the market. This young couple were the only customers to try a new car in the first hour after the market opened.

(BITE ID) MA YI Car buyer

(SOUNDBITE) (Chinese) "I can see the market is very quiet. The price is very low as well. But I am still not very sure if I should spend my money. I think most people would rather spend less money on a cheap car like this, not those luxury ones."

(VOICE OVER) Figures from the State Information Center show that stocks of passenger cars manufactured in China in May reached over one million, the result of manufacturers' overly optimistic expectations for this year's market.

(BITE ID) QIE XIAOGANG, Director Yayuncun Automobile Market Information Center

(SOUNDBITE) (Chinese) "The market has been deteriorating since April, and now it has reached its lowest point. Yayuncun is a typical example in Beijing. According to our survey in ten other big cities, their situation is almost as bad."

(VOICE OVER) Just one month ago, the Beijing Car Expo seemed to have opened a new world for locals. And flexible controls on import permits led to the appearance of more cut-price foreign cars in China. But all these have failed to boost the market. Car dealers say that's because people who are able to own cars have already managed to get what they want in the last two years. But economists have a different view. First, the macro-adjustment policy drawn up earlier this year seems to be working. Fixed asset investments have been limited. Overheated industries such as real estate and metallurgy have been reined in. Secondly, bank loans are proving difficult to obtain for would-be car buyers. Banks are becoming highly cautious in funding car buyers, as many of them have problems in paying their mortgage. And finally, consumers are waiting for the quota on imported cars to be removed next year.

(BITE ID) XU ZIMING, Deputy Director State Information Center

(SOUNDBITE) (Chinese) "Consumers are no longer as anxious as they were a few years ago. The situation may be a little better later this year if consumers recognize that there is much space for price cutting. But one thing is for sure, the car market has become a complete buyer's market."

(STAND UP ID) [REPORTER] CCTV, Beijing

(STAND UP) Experts also admit that despite the stalling market, a large number of potential buyers still exists. Next week, top analysts will gather in Beijing to try and figure what will happen in the second half of the year. But no matter what the future holds, in a buyer's market, manufacturers and dealers will have to take more of their clients' interests into consideration. [REPORTER], CCTV.

***Story 4: (SUPER) MOURNING CHILE***

(SLUG) Chile to re-evaluate embassy security

(LEAD IN) Chile plans to revise security measures at its embassies overseas following Tuesday's hostage crisis in Costa Rica, in which three Chilean diplomats were killed. Both countries have announced several days of mourning to remember the victims. [FOREIGN EXPERT] has more.

(VOICE OVER) At a memorial service on Wednesday, Chilean President Ricardo Lagos said that security measures in each of the country's embassies are being evaluated. He added that what happened was an isolated crisis, and not related to Costa Rica's security policy.

(BITE ID) RICARDO LAGOS Chilean President

(SOUNDBITE) (Spanish) "These have been difficult hours for the country. The Chilean Embassy is part of our territory, it's our home. But unfortunately, a tragic event took place there and as I said to the president of Costa Rica who called me, this event does not reflect on his country. Costa Rica is a tranquil country, and what happened is that a person lost control of his mental facilities."

(VOICE OVER) On Tuesday, a 54-year-old police officer who was in charge of the Chilean embassy security for more than 5 years took nine embassy employees hostage after learning he would be transferred. When police stormed the embassy building, he shot and killed three hostages before turning the gun on himself. Costa Rican police are facing growing criticism for their handling of the crisis. Critics say they should have continued negotiations with the policeman. The Chilean government has promised to pay for the victims' family members to go claim their loved ones' bodies. [FOREIGN EXPERT], CCTV

***Story 5: (SUPER) AIRLINES COMPETE***

(SLUG) Foreign airlines vie for Chinese

(LEAD IN) To business ... Chinese travelers with a yearning for seeing the sights of Europe will soon have more options. Beginning in September, many more Chinese citizens will be able to take trips to Europe. And the new vacation packages are attracting many foreign airline companies to compete for Chinese customers. Meanwhile, prices for European travel from China have been dropping lower and lower. [WRITER] has the details.

(VOICE OVER) The power of China's nearly 1.4 billion people has been making waves in the international business arena. The latest craze -- new travel opportunities for Chinese in Europe, has been creating a lot of buzz in the industry. Foreign airlines began competing for travelers one month before European access was opened. Royal Dutch Airlines struck first, promoting the first European package for Chinese customers. The package includes round-trip air tickets and hotel accommodations. Tourists can choose to stay in any one of several hundred hotels in 22 countries.

(BITE ID) ZHANG PENG, Manager KLM Royal Dutch Airlines China office

(SOUNDBITE) (C) "If tourists want to go to the Netherlands and then to France, we will give them a free air ticket from Amsterdam to Paris. And our prices for hotels are much cheaper compared to domestic airline companies. "

(VOICE OVER) Travelers hope packages such as this will usher in an unstoppable wave. Lufthansa Airlines charges prices of about 6330 yuan, that's less than 800 US dollars, for round trip tickets between China and Europe. But air flight prices by Chinese airlines for similar routes are higher, around 8000 yuan, or some 1000 US dollars. [WRITER] CCTV

### Appendix 5: Test for inter-coder reliability

Story #	Topic				Referred to				Who speaks			
	M	N1	N2	Result	M	N1	N2	Result	M	N1	N2	Result
1	1	1	1		2	3	2		0	0	0	
2	1	1	1		2	3	2		0	0	0	
3	1	1	1		2	2	2		0	0	0	
4	1	1	1		4	4	4		0	0	0	
5	1	1	1		7	7	7		0	0	0	
6	1	1	1		3	7	5		0	0	0	
7	1	1	1		4	5	4		0	0	0	
8	0	1	1		10	10	15		0	0	0	
9	1	1	1		1	3	3		1	1	1	
10	0	1	1		3	4	4		1	1	1	
11	1	1	1		6	7	7		0	0	0	
12	1	1	1		7	11	8		1	2	2	
13	0	1	1		2	2	3		0	0	0	
14	0	1	1		4	6	5		0	0	0	
15	1	1	1		3	5	8		0	0	0	
16	1	1	1		9	9	10		0	0	0	
17	1	1	1		2	2	2		0	0	0	
18	1	1	1		2	4	3		0	0	0	
19	1	1	1		7	7	8		0	0	0	
20	1	1	1		4	4	9		1	1	1	
21	1	1	1		5	7	9		2	2	2	
22	1	1	1		10	10	11		1	1	1	
23	0	1	1		3	5	6		0	2	2	
24	0	1	1		17	19	18		2	2	3	
	18	24	24	0.75	119	146	155	0.79	9	12	13	0.72

Holsti (1969 p. 140) formula: Reliability =  $2M / (N1+N2)$

M = Number of coding decisions agreed on

N1 = Number of coding decisions by Coder A

N2 = Number of coding decisions by Coder B

Test results:

Topic = 0.75

Referred to = 0.79

Who speaks = 0.72

## **Appendix 6: IRB Consent Forms**

IRB # 2003-05-0026

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

The University of Texas at Austin

I am asking you to take part in a research study of the news production process at CCTV-9, Beijing, PRC. This form provides you with information about the study. As the Principal Investigator, I shall describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Title of Research Study: News production at CCTV-9 and the globalization of China Central Television

Principal Investigators:

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The purpose of this research is to study the news production process at CCTV-9. As part of this study, about 20 media theorists, media managers, and media workers at CCTV-9 are being interviewed.

I shall interview you now for an initial period of a maximum of 90 minutes. With your consent, I may ask for your further participation in the interview process at a later date. In this interview, I shall ask you questions about CCTV-9, and if appropriate, how you came to work here, and what has been your experience at CCTV-9. I may also ask you to comment on news and media developments in the People's Republic of China, and how they relate to you and your work at CCTV-9. Any future interview will cover similar issues, in a manner to clarify questions I may have about the news production process at CCTV-9.

To the best of my knowledge, there is little to no risk to you in taking part in this study. My primary concern is your confidentiality. Without your consent, you will not be identified by name in this research. If you wish me not to use your name in this study, please tell me now.

Your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records will be protected by the following means:

- (a) The interview will be audio taped on a 90-minute audio cassette
- (b) The cassette will be numbered. No information identifying you will be visible on the cassette
- (c) The cassette will be kept in a secure place in my possession
- (d) As the principal investigator, I am only person who will listen to the recording
- (e) Unless you want me to return the cassette to you after I have transcribed it, I shall destroy the cassette immediately after I have transcribed it.

(f) The transcription of the recording will be numbered. Your name will not be put on the transcription

During the interview, you may skip any question I ask if you do not wish to answer it.

It will not cost you anything to take part in this study.

You will not receive compensation for taking part in this study.

The potential benefit to you or others taking part in this research is an improved understanding of the news production process at CCTV-9.

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin and or CCTV-9.

If you wish to stop taking part in this research, you may end this interview at any time, and withdraw your consent to all or part of its use. Throughout the study, I shall notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study. I can be contacted in Beijing at +1 (0) 10 6849 8888 x63641.

In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Clarke A. Burnham, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, +1 (512) 232 4383.

Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin and the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order.

If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed without your consent.

The researchers will not benefit from your participation in this study.

If you wish to discuss any of the information above or have any questions about this interview and my research, please ask me now.

IRB # 2003-05-0026

研究访谈征求同意书

德克萨斯大学奥斯汀分校

您将应邀参与一项研究。以下文字提供了这项研究的有关情况。作为主要研究人员，我将向您描述研究课题并回答您的所有的问题。请仔细阅读，并在决定是否参与本项研究之前就任何您不理解的事项提问。您的参与完全自愿，拒绝参与不会造成您应得利益的损失或者不利因素。

研究课题：CCTV-9的新闻制作与中央电视台的全球化

主要研究人员（包括导师）、所属系别和电话号码：

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本项研究力求以一个局中人的角度观察新闻制作过程。大约20位与CCTV-9有关的媒体理论学者、管理者和从业人员将参与访谈，并构成该课题的一部分。

访谈至多占用您90分钟。经您同意后，时间可能延长。访谈涉及CCTV-9、中华人民共和国的新闻、中华人民共和国的媒体在国内外的的发展以及您在CCTV-9的工作情况。您将就以上领域适合您的方面发表您的意见、态度和理解。

研究课题可能带给您的风险微不足道。未经您的同意，研究中不会引用您的姓名。

访谈记录的独立性和机要性得到如下保护：

(a)访谈时录音

(b)录音磁带有编号。磁带上没有标明您身份的信息

- (c)磁带由我保留在安全的地方
- (d)只有主要研究人员听录音
- (e)磁带内容被抄录后即被销毁，除非您要求个人保留磁带
- (f)磁带的抄录本上有编号，但是没有您的名字。

您可以跳过任何您不愿回答的问题。

研究访谈不需要您经济上的支出。

研究访谈是无偿的。

研究访谈可能促进对CCTV-9新闻制作过程的理解。

研究访谈完全自愿。您可以拒绝，这不会影响您与CCTV-9和德克萨斯大学奥斯汀分校现在和将来的关系。

如果您出于任何原因希望停止参与本研究课题，请致电：John Jirik +86 (0) 10 6849 8888 x63641。您可以在任何时间收回参与访谈的同意并终止参与本研究，这不会造成您应得利益的损失或者不利因素。课题组人员会及时向您通报可能影响您作出是否继续参与本项研究之决定的新情况。

除此之外，如果您对研究参与者的权利有任何疑问，请致电德克萨斯大学奥斯汀分校保护研究对象制度检查委员会主任Clarke A. Burnham博士：+1 (512) 232 4383。

经德克萨斯大学奥斯汀分校制度检查委员会授权的人员享有法律赋予的权利翻阅您的访谈记录，并依法保护这些记录的机要性。不经过法律或法庭程序，研究记录不会在没有征得您的同意的情况下公开。

如果研究成果发表或在学术会议上公布，未经您的同意，您的姓名不会被提及。

课题研究人员不会从您的参与中牟利。

如果您希望就以上文字或其他引起您关注的事项提出商榷，请现在提出

## **Appendix 7: CCTV-9 programs**

The following lists are taken verbatim from CCTV-9 promotional materials. List 1 is a description of CCTV-9 programs prior to the May 3, 2004 relaunch. List 2 is a description of CCTV-9 programs after the relaunch. The only changes I have made to the lists are to organize them by production section, and in alphabetical order within each production section.

### **LIST 1: CCTV-9 PROGRAMS BEFORE THE MAY 3, 2004 RELAUNCH**

#### **News:**

- BIZ CHINA highlights the latest financial activities and market trends in China and how the Chinese economy interacts with global trade and finance. It is a specialist's account of one of the world's fastest developing economies. With BIZ CHINA, we mean business.
- BUSINESS GUIDE is a program designed for those who want to do business in China. The 30-minute program introduces policies and regulations of the Chinese government on the economy as well as the investment environment in various parts of the country. It is a guide on where and how to invest in China.
- CCTV NEWS is the channel's news flagship. It is designed to update viewers on all the latest events happening in China and major international news. The 30-minute show is compiled from a number of different sources: domestic and international reports by CCTV's own news crews, local TV stations around China, other news organizations in the country as well as international news agencies.

- CHINA THIS WEEK is a weekly review of the main news over the past seven days. It is intended for people who have missed most or part of the news and want an overview of the news stories in the past week.
- CULTURE EXPRESS is a daily magazine of news and information about China's cultural scene. It showcases the colorful and diverse culture of modern China. The arts, fashion, changing lifestyle, CULTURE EXPRESS covers it all. Everyday on CCTV-9, CULTURE EXPRESS gives viewers a Chinese culture extravaganza.
- FINANCIAL REVIEW is another program to serve the business people both in China and overseas. The half-hour show looks at movements on China's financial markets. There are also interviews with financial analysts who give their take on market development and trends.
- NEWS ASIA is dedicated to reporting the news in Asia. The 15-minute program keeps viewers abreast of what's happening throughout this diverse continent. NEWS ASIA is comprehensive coverage of Asia by the people who know Asia best.
- SPORTS SCENE updates viewers on the action on the sports arena. Everyday, it wraps up all the athletic events in China and throughout the world. It is where sports fans can catch up on their favorite games and players.
- WORLD WIDE WATCH is a 30-minute international news program. It is how the world is looked at through Chinese eyes. By reporting major events happening around the globe, the program strives to give viewers a broader picture of the world today. It also offers a Chinese perspective on world events and issues through in-depth reports, expert analysis and commentaries.



**Current Affairs:**

- DIALOGUE<sup>178</sup> is a daily 30-minute talk show. It brings the movers and shakers, celebrities and specialists into the studio to express their opinions on current affairs and hot topics. It is a dialogue of different opinions and a public forum of free debates.
- WORLD INSIGHT is a weekly program designed to give viewers insightful analysis on major international events and issues. It not only reviews historic moments and recaps the images that shape our world today, but also goes behind the stories, digs deep to what causes them and analyzes their potential impact.

**Features:**

- AROUND CHINA is a feature program showcasing the history, culture, landscapes and people of this vast country. It focuses on the everyday lives of ordinary people. It is a collaboration of CCTV-9 and hundreds of local TV stations in China.
- CENTER STAGE is a daily half-hour entertainment magazine show. It serves as a stage for the colorful Chinese performing arts. It not only showcases stage performances on stage, but also tells what's happening off stage. CENTER STAGE is a platform for authentic Chinese arts.
- CHINA TODAY is a weekly 30-minute program, documenting political reform and social evolution in a changing China. It offers a more in-depth look at major events and issues in the country. CHINA TODAY presents not only an ancient culture but also a country on the move.

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<sup>178</sup> I have left in spelling and grammatical errors as they occur in the originals, which were copy edited by one of the team of native English speakers employed by CCTV-9.

- CHINESE CIVILIZATION is a five minute short film slot introducing China's enduring civilization. It helps viewers to better understand China's history and culture.
- DOCUMENTARY is a 30-minute program which broadcasts CCTV's best-produced documentaries. It records the historic events in China and relives some of the greatest moments in history.
- NATURE AND SCIENCE is a report on the latest scientific achievements in China. It also deciphers the mysteries and laws in the fascinating natural world. NATURE AND SCIENCE helps discover the harmonious relationships between humanity and the environment.
- REDISCOVERING CHINA gives a fresh look at China through non-Chinese eyes. Hosted by native English speakers, the program shows how they look at and understand what is happening in the country. It is a different account by people who are often fascinated by this ancient yet modern nation.
- TRAVELOGUE takes viewers on a journey to some of the country's best destinations. China's sights and sounds come alive as our hosts guide you through the country's diverse and beautiful landscapes, rich culture and history as well as hospitable people.

**Production House:**

- LEARN TO SPEAK CHINESE is the only educational program on CCTV-9. It is aimed at satisfying the increasing international demand for learning the Chinese language. LEARN TO SPEAK CHINESE is key to understanding the Chinese culture.

- SHANGHAI TODAY is a 15-minute program of news and information about China's financial center and economic power house of Shanghai. It is produced by Shanghai TV and packaged by CCTV-9.

## **LIST 2: CCTV-I PROGRAMS AFTER THE MAY 3, 2004 RELAUNCH**

### **News:**

- ASIA TODAY debuted on CCTV International on May 3, 2004. This 30-minute program airs three times a day and aims to keep viewers updated on news concerning Asia. Asia Today presents a comprehensive look at important issues on the continent in a manner that is objective and reflective of all perspectives. Information is useless without understanding, and understanding is what Asia Today provides. Joined by our CCTV correspondents based around the world, we report on Asia from the perspective of Asians.

Not just events of the moment, but issues that affect our lives.

Not just headlines, but the bottom line.

Not just a perspective from a distance, but insights from the inside.

- BIZ CHINA replaced Financial Report and has become CCTV International's flagship business news program. Broadcast live from Beijing, Biz China delivers news, opinions and analysis six times a day, everyday.

Biz China is made up of three significant components. First, up-to-date domestic and international financial and corporate news. Second, Biz China exclusive interviews featuring the insights, opinions, and forecasts of business insiders on the state of the economy, business trends, and industry analysis. And finally, our

Market Analysts provide a recap on the activities taking place in the financial markets around the world.

If you want to witness China's dramatic economic growth first hand, understand China's business and industrial policies, and keep your finger firmly on the pulse of business trends in this dynamic environment, watch Biz China.

- CCTV NEWS<sup>179</sup> updates viewers on major events taking place around the world with an emphasis on events happening in China. Apart from being a bulletin of the latest world news, CCTV News is the prime source of information on the world's most dynamic economy. CCTV International's reporters cover China with timely, accurate and objective reports.

CCTV news provides a first hand look at the news shaping China and the world.

- CHINA THIS WEEK is a magazine show that offers an insightful summary on the stories of the past seven days. As part of CCTV International's relaunch in May 3, 2004, China This Week has been given a fresh look with new content and a new format.

Among the additions within the program is "Voices This Week" where viewers can listen to the headliners behind the headlines discussing issues relating to the Chinese mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao. That's not all. "People This Week" features top figures from the world of politics, sports, business and entertainment. China This Week's focus remains "Top Story This Week" complimented by "In Brief This Week". These two segments give the viewer a chance to catch up on all the essential China events the viewer may have missed

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<sup>179</sup> News Updates were produced by the CCTV News teams

during the week. And finally, with an eye on the future, experts offer their opinions on the issues that will shape the news of tomorrow.

- **CULTURE EXPRESS:** The new and improved Culture Express is dedicated to giving viewers updated reports on Chinese cultural news and events. Each of the seven segments deals with a particular aspect of Chinese culture.

“24/7” is a roundup review of the latest cultural NEWS;

“Chopsticks” takes the viewer on a culinary odyssey around the country in search of Chinese DELICACIES;

“The List” takes a look at the lives of outstanding PEOPLE in the arts;

“China Cool” is the biggest attraction of our weekend programs and provides a stage to showcase Chinese traditional art forms and ethnic culture; and two newly established segments, “Spotlight” and “Celebrity Interview”, add a new star-studded dimension to our program.

In addition to being a melting pot of the traditional and the modern, as well as a bridge between the East and the West, Culture Express is also a trend-setter.

- **SPORTS SCENE** is a daily 15-minute sports news program on CCTV International. The program brings a roundup of major sports stories taking place in China and around the world with a focus on domestic sporting events.

Every Sunday, there is a 30-minute special edition of Sports Scene<sup>180</sup> (on Sundays, the program broadcast time begins 15 minutes earlier than weekday broadcasts).

In addition to the latest sporting news, the weekend edition of Sports Scene includes a recap of the past week’s main stories and a profile of one of China’s

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<sup>180</sup> Sports Weekend

Olympic champions. With the Olympic Games coming to Beijing, China in 2008, Sports Scene will be playing an even more important role in keeping the world abreast of Olympic Games related developments in Beijing and China's contributions to the world of sports.

- WORLD WIDE WATCH is a 30-minute program dedicated to reporting major international news and events. It is a daily roundup of world news with a Chinese perspective. Intended to give the viewer a balanced picture of today's world, World Wide Watch is compiled from the rich resources of CCTV and other international agencies such as Reuters, AP and AVN.

Twice a day, World Wide Watch not only covers major world events and issues, but also provides in-depth reports, background stories and expert analysis. In addition, the program gives extensive coverage on what's happening in the developing world.

World Wide Watch is CCTV International's effort to add yet another source of information to the international information flow.

#### **Current Affairs:**

- DIALOGUE is one of the most acclaimed and influential programs on CCTV International. This 30 minute current affairs news magazine is an authoritative talk show designed to inform and educate viewers worldwide and influence decision makers in governments, businesses and academia.

Dialogue provides fair and comprehensive analysis of current affairs within the framework of cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary comparisons. Chinese and foreign guests openly express their opinions on issues making headlines in China

and around the world. Through frank discussions, and sometimes heated debates, viewers are encouraged to reach their own conclusions.

The knowledge, expertise, insight and candor of Dialogue's guests are a significant component of the program. A sample of our guests include former U.S. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton; former U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, the President of Yale University, Richard Levin; and world renowned Chinese film maker, Chen Kaige.

The intelligence, sharp wit and depth of our anchors make up the other indispensable elements of Dialogue. Our Anchors are always willing and ready to ask the tough questions that are on the minds of our viewers.

- WORLD INSIGHT is your first choice for in-depth stories about an emerging China and global change. Featuring analysis from leading scholars, World Insight brings you the story behind the news. For timely, thoughtful and provocative analysis of international affairs.

World Insight is a must watch program for the intelligent viewer. Aimed at policy makers, business people and academics inside and outside China, World Insight aims to inform audience from a Chinese point of view.

Focusing on major global events and Chinese foreign affairs, World Insight is an indispensable tool for people serious about China.

**Features:**

- AROUND CHINA is a television magazine program jointly produced by CCTV International and local TV stations across China. Around China introduces the

people, culture and economic development of various regions and ethnic minority groups of China to the world.

Around China offers viewers glimpses of the beautiful scenery and rich cultural heritage of China, as well as the ever-changing lifestyle of the Chinese people as we embark onto the 21st century.

- CENTRE STAGE is a 30 minute entertainment program that broadcasts every Saturday and Sunday on CCTV International. Centre Stage regards its target audience as art aficionados of the world and performing arts fans at home in China. The content of Centre Stage is composed of a wide range of performing arts, including Chinese folk songs, dance, opera, popular music, and the latest trends in the performing arts scene in China.

Through years of research and experience, the team at Centre Stage has made successive changes to the program. The result is a unique style that combines visual appeal with informative content presented by hosts with rich personal understandings of the Chinese culture. Consequently, Centre Stage has been an exceptionally popular program since 1995.

- CHINESE CIVILIZATION is a vivid presentation of the highlights of Chinese culture throughout her 5,000-year history. We bring to life the historical celebrities, historical sites, folk arts, literature, education, science and technology of mankind's most enduring civilization.

Chinese Civilization is an informative window on the nation aimed at overseas audiences. Short, though comprehensive in scope, each episode of Chinese Civilization is a finely made mini documentary, offering audiences a unique visual feast as well as information on almost all aspects of China's cultural history in an accessible way.



Chinese Civilization is a five-minute program shown every weekday on CCTV International.

- **DOCUMENTARY:** Shown daily on CCTV International, Documentary is a 30-minute program that showcases the very best of Chinese documentaries. These documentaries provide a faithful record of the extraordinary undertakings by the Chinese people as we entered the contemporary era, with an emphasis on the period of reform that began in the late 70s.

Presenting true stories of the lives, feelings, and ambitions of the Chinese people, Documentary consistently reveals the human values behind the stories which are readily accessible and comprehensible to viewers from other cultures. Containing both individual and serial programs, Documentary strives to select the finest documentaries on purely cinematic criteria: good storytelling, visual quality and professional production standards. While enabling the audience to appreciate the aesthetics of the documentary as an art form, Documentary is also a cultural experience that encourages viewers to ponder about the real stories taking place in China everyday.

- **NATURE AND SCIENCE** is a report on the latest scientific achievements in China. It also deciphers the mysteries and laws in the fascinating natural world. NATURE AND SCIENCE helps discover the harmonious relationships between humanity and the environment.<sup>181</sup>
- **REDISCOVERING CHINA** first aired five years ago and covers topics such as Chinese history, culture, and the everyday life of Chinese people. The main attraction of this show lies in the fact that China is seen from the perspective of a

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<sup>181</sup> The post-relaunch promotional material I used for this list did not include a description for Nature & Science, only the name and a photograph of the host, [name]. I have repeated the description in List 2 from List 1.

foreigner. Our hosts come to China from countries around the world and bring with them a diverse background bounded by love for China.

In the last two years, Rediscovering China programs have received many awards. Recently, Rediscovering China featured a 24-part series on the Western China Development Project which won first prize for feature programs from CCTV.

- TRAVELOGUE is a 30-minute travel show that brings incredible adventures to viewers at home in China and abroad. On each edition of Travelogue, acting as both tour guide and traveler, Liu Changying, Xiaolan, Yanling and Chenlei draw on their intimate knowledge of China to reveal the country's enduring attractions. They go a long way to bring China's people and places closer to you.

Right now, Travelogue is the only English television travel show in China.

- UP-CLOSE presents an entertaining yet thought provoking look into the lives of the extraordinary people you want to know as we march into the 21st century. Every Sunday, this 45-minute program features intimate conversations with distinguished guests. Up-Close focuses on their remarkable life stories, challenges, passions, failures and triumphs. These prominent guests are influential politicians, bold entrepreneurs, compassionate philanthropists, enlightened educators and glamorous celebrities. Regardless of age and nationality, whether male or female, all Up-Close guests share one common quality – they all have an inspirational and unforgettable story to share.

The format and production scale of Up-Close is unparalleled at CCTV International. Up-Close is the only program at CCTV international to incorporate a live studio audience. Studio audience members are active contributors to the program through their interactions with the guest and host of Up-Close.

The host of Up-Close is Liu Feifei (Christina Lau). Born in China and raised in America, Liu Feifei is a true product of her cross-cultural upbringing. Her sharp wit and intellectual curiosity, together with her thoughtful nature and casual style, bring viewers worldwide the amazing stories behind fascinating People.

**Production House:**

- LEARN TO SPEAK CHINESE, a 15-minute program on CCTV International, is China's only language teaching series broadcast worldwide. Starting from the early 90's, seven series of Learn to Speak Chinese have been made, including Hello Beijing, International Business Chinese, Chinese 400, Kindergarten Chinese, After School Chinese and Communicate in Chinese.

These programs not only aroused great interest among viewers to learn Chinese, but also popularized knowledge about the Chinese economy, culture, and tourism. Learn to Speak Chinese continues to playing an active role in helping the world learn more about China. Currently, the production team is busy preparing a new series to be titled "Travel in Chinese".

## **Appendix 8: List of instructions and directives**

1. 2004-04-26 (17)

关于香港报道的指示

关于香港的报道，所有栏目只发时政部和经过批准的港站消息，其他来源的消息一律不发。

Guidelines for reporting on Hong Kong

Only use government information and information ratified by the Hong Kong government when reporting on Hong Kong. Do not use information from any other source.

2. 2004-04-26 (18)

中华慈善总会主办的北京至西藏慈善宣传万里行

中华慈善总会主办的北京至西藏慈善宣传万里行活动各栏新闻一律不发

The China Charity Federation sponsored Beijing to Tibet charity publicity campaign.

No news programs are to report on the China Charity Federation sponsored Beijing to Tibet charity publicity campaign.

[The CCF is a non-governmental organization. Hence its activities draw attention to areas in which the government is failing to provide services.]

3. 2004-05-14

重要通知

上海珠宝丢失案暂时不报，等警方消息。

河南瓜农的片子不报。

#### Important Notice

There is a temporary injunction on reporting on the case of the lost jewelry in Shanghai, and on related police information.

Do not show the Henan melon farmers.

[The Shanghai jewelry story relates to the theft of about US 1 million dollars worth of jewelry on May 13, 2004 at the 44th Shanghai International Jewelry Fair (China Daily, 2004b).]

#### 4. 2004-07-09 (25)

##### 外交部通知

任何档新闻不得播发有关部分民众到日本驻华使馆抗议之事。

##### Ministry of Foreign Affairs Notice

No news is to broadcast anything about the protest at the Japanese Embassy.

[Several dozen Chinese on July 9 2004 protested outside the Japanese Embassy in Beijing over Japanese exploration for oil in a disputed section of the East China sea (China Daily, 2004c).]

#### 5. 2004-09-22 (29)

##### 通知

中心指示：关于“粮食涨价引起学生伙食涨价”一事不要炒作。

##### Notice

Central directive: Concerning the story that “rising grain prices cause rising

student canteen prices” don’t stir things up.

6. 2004-10-08 (30)

宣传通知

10月8号19点20分总局总编室电话通知：关于中朝建交55周年纪念活动的新闻报道要适度，对两国领导人互致贺电摘要报道，对有关纪念活动简要报道。

Publicity Notice

Oct 8, 19:20 telephone notice from the Chief Editor’s office, SARFT: Concerning the 55th anniversary of PRC, DPRK diplomatic relations, news reports must be appropriate: a summary report of the two country’s leaders exchange of congratulatory telegrams; a brief report on activities relating to the anniversary.

7. 2004-10-10

蒙牛集团负面报道一概不报

蒙牛集团负面报道一概不报

Absolutely no reporting on the negative report on the Mengniu Dairy Group

Absolutely no reporting on the negative report on the Mengniu Dairy Group

[On October 8, 2004, the Mengniu Dairy Group failed a Beijing government spot check for bacteria in its popsicle products in Beijing. Mengniu in 2004 was CCTV’s single biggest advertiser, buying 310 million yuan (USD 37.6 million) worth of air time at the annual advertising auction in November 2003 (Chou Wiest, 2003; Huang, 2004)]

8. 2005-01-12

重要通知

接中宣部新闻局最新通知：关于境外媒体刊发”赵紫阳病逝”不实消息，外交部新闻发言人答记者问予以澄清一事，国内媒体（包括新闻网站，子报，子刊）一律不报道。

Important Notice

The latest notice from the CPD News Dept.: Concerning the incorrect reports by foreign media that “Zhao Ziyang has died,” the Foreign Ministry Spokesperson has answered reporters’ questions and clarified the matter. No domestic media (including internet portals, subsidiary publications) without exception are to report this story.

[Zhao Ziyang was terminally ill at the time and died on January 17, 2005.]

9. 2005-03-31

不要上当受骗

主任指示：明天是愚人节，国内国际编辑千万注意辨别新闻真假，不要上当受骗

Do not be fooled:

Notice from the directors: Tomorrow is April Fool’s Day. Domestic and international editors, pay attention and distinguish real from fake news. Do not be fooled.

10. 2005-04-27

重要通知

李挺要求：新华社内供中文专线的稿子必须核实才能发。一般只对外，国内一般不用。

Important notice

Order from Li Ting [Director, CCTV News Center]: The internal *Xinhua* Chinese special wire draft service can be used must be verified before use. This only concerns the overseas services. Domestic services in general should not use.

11. 2005-05-14 (5)

重要通知

关于俄罗斯警察与中国劳动人员发生冲突的新闻，新华社和人民日报可以发，但电视台任何频道，任何栏目不能法。这是外交部的正式通知。

Important notice

Only *Xinhua* and *People's Daily* can report on the clash between the Russian police and Chinese workers. No television station, channel or program is to report it. This is an official Ministry of Foreign Affairs notice.

[On May 11, Russian police and Chinese construction workers clashed during a visa check in Irkutsk, Siberia (Interfax, 2005).]

12. 2005-05-18 (6)

重要通知

接领导通知，重庆市委常委，宣传部长强宗海因受贿罪一审被判15年的新闻，各档不再报道！

Important notice



Notice from the leadership. On Chongqing Municipal Party Committee Member and Head of Publicity Dept., Zhang Zonghai, being found guilty of bribery in his first trial and sentenced to 15 year, no news is to report it again.

13. 2005-05-25

重要通知

主任通知：成都火车站警察和小偷互相勾结的新闻，各档一律不发！

Important notice

Notice from the director: No news at all is to report on the story about collusion between the Chengdu Railway Station police and petty thieves.

14. 2005-06-28 (11)

重要通知

中心王主任通知：中央；国家机关深入开展节约活动新闻今天暂不发。

Important notice

Central Director Wang notice: Today there is a temporary injunction on reporting on the Central State organs conservation activities.

15. 2005-07-05 (12)

最高指示

上级指示，7月6号（新闻早八点），（心稳30分）和商务所有30分钟的节目都要中波（胡锦涛出席上海合作组织成员国元首会议）（时长8份5秒）。如果有关于主席的新的传颂，要把最新消息放在前面，然后紧接着播出词条。切记！

Top level directive

Directive from above, July 6 “8am early news”, “News Half Hour” and all 30 minute morning bulletins must repeat “Hu Jintao attends the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member Country Heads of State Meeting” (length 8 minutes, 45 seconds). If there is a new dispatch concerning the president, put the latest information at the top of the bulletin, right after that run this piece. Don’t forget!

16. 2005-07-17 (14) (check)

注意！！！！

接上级通知，胡锦涛祝贺马英九当选的片子，早八点发的时候，把李瑞英那段拿出当导语，字版照播，后面关于马英九当选那条就算了不要播了。

Attention!!!

Notice received from higher authorities: The video on Hu Jintao congratulating Ma Ying-jeou on his election [as Chairman of the Guomindang Party (KMT) in Taiwan], the 8am broadcast, take out the synopsis on Li Ruiying, insert a picture and caption, the section after that on Ma Ying-jeou’s election is not to be broadcast.

17. 2005-07-21

再注意一下！！！！

17号晚间新闻播出的”藏传佛教密宗灌顶弘法仪典在香港举行”一片只在滚动22点播出。其余各档一律不得播出，违者卷铺盖走人！！！！

“The Tibetan Buddhist Grand Ordination Ceremony conducted in Hong Kong” broadcast on the evening news on the 17<sup>th</sup> can be shown in part on the 2200

broadcast. The remainder is not to be broadcast. Anybody disobeying this will be sacked!!!

18. 2005-07-21 (16)

不发！！中国不会首先使用核武器

新华社通知：

新华社今天播发的”李肇星强调：中国不会首先使用核武器”中央文稿，各档节目一律不要采用！！！！

Do not air!! China rules out first use of nuclear weapons

*Xinhua* notice:

No programs are to use today's *Xinhua* story "Li Zhaoxing stresses China no first use of nuclear weapons"!!!

[The PRC's Foreign Minister was apparently attempting to calm the waters after Zhu Chenghu, a major-general of the People's Liberation Army and a professor at the PRC's National Defense University, said the PRC might "respond with nuclear weapons" if attacked by the United States in any conflict over Taiwan and were prepared "for the destruction of all the cities east of Xi'an" in such a war (Yeh, 2005).]

19. 2005-10-26 (32)

关于禽流感的新闻，国外的咱跟着报，国内的少报。

Concerning Bird Flu news, if it's overseas report it straight, if it's domestic tone it down.

20. 2005-10-28 (33)

宣传提示

中办精神：关于胡锦涛此次出访朝鲜，越南，本频道要全程报道，充分，详细，不能有任何删减。

Publicity prompt

Basic idea: On the visit of Hu Jintao to the DPRK and Vietnam, this channel must fully cover the story, amply and in detail, do not leave anything out.

21. 2005-10-30 (35)

中宣部新闻局通知

对韩国汉城议会近日通过旨在废除“间岛条约”决议案一事不要报道

四套转达赵台指示：有关华裔专家许靖华挑战达尔文的消息不要报道

CPD News Dept. Notice

Do not report on the recent passage by the Seoul City Assembly of a draft resolution abolishing the “Islands Treaty.”

Si Tao conveys Zhao Tai’s directive: Do not report on the challenge of Darwinian Theory by ethnic Chinese expert Xu Jinghua.

22. 2005-10-31 (36)

总局总编室

禽流感报道注意事项：

要准确适度，重在引导，普及知识，支持产业发展。总体上要降温，要控制总理，不宜过多。重点栏目，节目不做报道。要加强科普宣传，访谈节目所请专家要经过农业部，卫生部认可，不得预测禽流感发展的后果，以免引起社会恐慌。

SARFT General Editor's Office

Key notes on reporting Bird Flu:

Reports must be accurate and appropriate. It is important to take the lead, disseminate knowledge, support the development of industry. Overall, lower the temperature, keep things under control, do not over do it. Do not put the [bird flu] stories at the top of the hour or as lead stories. Use science to popularize the issue. Any expert invited onto a talk show must be approved by the Agriculture and Health Ministries. Do not speculate about the possible future development of Bird Flu. Avoid causing social panic.

## **Appendix 9: News desk**

Pro: [xxx]

Cc: [xxx]

Ex: Jirik

Dear [xxx], [xxx]

Attached is a document outlining how to develop a News Desk which integrates the Assignment Desk into the news gathering and production operation, and gives the Assignment Desk the place in the News Desk and news operation envisaged by [News Corp. consultant] in his notes to [Controller] (to the best of my understanding).

Best Rgds.

John.

### **CCTV-9 NEWS DESK**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The News Desk is the heart of the news operation.

Currently, what we have at CCTV-9 is a strong news production system, a strong reporting team, but weak coordination of news gathering with production.

The starting point to building the News Desk is to recognize that a) news gathering, and b) news production are separate but integrated parts of the news operation.

On the news gathering side of the operation are the Reporting Group (led by [xxx]), and the Assignment Desk (led by [xxx]).

On the news production side is [xxx]'s operation: CCTV News, WWW, CultX, Sports, BizChina, Asia Today, all of which are overseen by Producers, who report to the Senior Producer.

The News Desk is the meeting point of these two structures. It is the place where a) news gathering, and b) news production meet. The News Desk is responsible for coordinating news gathering & news production, so that the needs of the shows and their producers are met. The CCTV News and WWW Producers are part of the News Desk.

The structure I lay out below recognizes 2 principles of news production at CCTV-9:

a) A centralized and face-to-face structure is necessary for efficiency in news production of CCTV News and WWW. The News Desk is the nerve center of the news operation, coordinating news gathering, and news production of CCTV News and WWW, which are produced in 3 time blocs by 3 teams, each responsible to a Producer (currently called Chief Editor).

b) A de-centralized production system is most efficient for producing news and Current Affairs programming other than CCTV News and WWW. This modular structure gives shows producers the autonomy they need to build cohesive news teams, responsible just for their own shows: CultX, Sports, BizChina, Asia Today, Current Affairs (Dialogue, World Insight, Up Close, China This Week).

Finally, as China's national and international English language broadcaster CCTV-9 has special responsibilities and characteristics. Therefore, the structure and functions of a News Desk cannot be imported from existing news organizations without some modification. But the key principle needs to be recognized: **news operations require a nerve center, and that center is the News Desk**. In what follows, I lay out a structure for a News Desk for CCTV-9, based on the principles of News Desks worldwide, but keeping in mind the special character of CCTV-9.

#### **COMPONENTS OF THE NEWS DESK**

##### **Senior Producer's Desk ([xxx])**

[Deputy News Director] oversees news production and reports directly to [name]  
(New Director, CCTV-9)

## **Producer's Desk**

The CCTV News and WWW Producers oversee production of CCTV News and WWW, and report to [Deputy News Director].

## **Assignment Desk**

The Assignment Desk has a range of news gathering and coordination functions. Its head is [xxx], who reports to [xxx]. The AD is the component currently not integrated into the desk. Below, I focus on the Assignment Desk as the missing component of the News Desk.

Once the Assignment Desk is integrated into the News Desk, a cohesive, face-to-face news gathering and news production coordination desk will exist at CCTV-9.

## **THE ASSIGNMENT DESK (AD)**

“... great emphasis at CCTV International will be given to the worldwide “assignment desk” which must be created. This assignment desk will serve as the “heart” of CCTV International...” (source: News Corp. consultant in a note to the CCTV-9 Controller)

“The assignment desk is the nerve center of your newsroom. If it works well, things go smoothly. If not... Assignment editors are managers, and not just of information. They need to know how to manage people as well...” (source: <http://www.newslab.org/resources/dothedesk.htm>)

“Assignment editors are the air traffic controllers of a newsroom. There is no glamour, no face time. But without them, newsrooms would certainly stumble...” (source: <http://asoundidea.com/personal/OnAssignment.html>)



“The assignment desk is also the place where story ideas come first, to be organized and arranged in calendars before each morning news meeting.” (source: <http://www.wzzm13.com/news4.html>)

## **Functions of the Assignment Desk**

### ***1) Long and short term story planning***

#### Short term story planning (news editing)

The AD is responsible for ongoing news editing. It must be ‘on top’ of the news, 24 hours a day, both domestically and internationally. The AD monitors all news sources and reports breaking and developing stories to the Reporting Group and Senior Producer (News), and Producers (CCTV News, WWW).

(Show producers other than CCTV News and WWW are responsible for their own short term news planning. However, the AD must keep abreast of what all news shows are planning. And the AD can advise on stories it becomes aware of as part of its day-to-day responsibilities to CCTV News and WWW).

The AD is also responsible for monitoring alerts and directives from within CCTV and from SARFT on news policy, and alerting producers to any information that affects their shows.

#### Long term story planning (forward planning)

The Planning Editor on the AD is responsible for recognizing future news events, and alerting the Reporting Group, and/or coordinating with the AD, Reporting Group and Senior Producer (News) the logistics of covering large scale and live events.

(Show producers other than CCTV News and WWW are responsible for their own long term news planning. BUT the Planning Editor and AD must be aware of the long term plans of all news and Current Affairs shows, and can advise any news or

Current Affairs show on stories they become aware of as part of their responsibility to CCTV News and WWW).

(The Reporting Group also develops its own stories, as part of forward planning. The AD keeps a log of these stories for production purposes.)

## ***2) Tracking sources & material***

The AD must liaise with the Reporting Group and keep track of all sources and source material for CCTV-9 both domestically and internationally.

The AD must know where crews are.

The AD must work to obtain coverage from third parties (other CCTV sections, other TV channels in China, overseas sources, APTN, Reuters, etc.) for CCTV News and WWW.

The AD can provide limited assistance to shows other than CCTV News, WWW to track down guests, interviews, coverage, etc. But this task is primarily that of the show producers.

## ***3) Technical coordination***

The AD coordinates all technical efforts required to transmit material to and from Beijing,  
domestically and internationally.

## **Structure of the AD component of the News Desk**

### ***Personnel***

Head of the Assignment Desk & Planning Editor

The Head of the Assignment Desk is a Senior Producer ([xxx]). She oversees the work of the desk and is at the same level as the Senior Producer, News ([xxx]), and

Senior Producer, Reporting Group ([xxx]). All three Senior Producers report to [xxx] (News Director). [xxx] is also Planning Editor, responsible for long term story planning. The importance of this position cannot be overstated. As [News Corp. consultant] notes: “The key is the futures editor. The key is that you have someone thinking about tomorrow. Because when you have someone thinking about tomorrow, you all of a sudden start to transform your news organization from a broadcasting one to a gathering one” (personal communication to the author).

#### Duty News Editor (DNE)

The Duty News Editors ([xxx] et al) are the absolute **heart and soul of the rolling news operation** at CCTV-9. Sometimes called ‘Assignment Editors,’ they have to become the one-stop shop for the entire news operation, aware of what news is happening, what is about to happen, and on top of all the logistics of coverage, so that the producers’ needs are served for CCTV News and WWW. In addition, the DNEs have a secondary responsibility to coordinate with other news shows and provide limited support to their operations.

#### Producer (ad hoc position)

For the purpose of getting the AD running, an ad-hoc position should be created that Jirik will fill. He will work with the AD personnel, the Senior Producers (News, Reporting Group), and Producers (CCTV News, WWW) to get the News Desk functioning. Once the News Desk is running, this position will be abolished, or converted to a second DNE position.

### **NEWS DESK HORIZONTAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER SECTIONS**

The primary responsibility of the News Desk is to news, and the primary responsibility of the Assignment Desk within the News Desk is to CCTV News and

WWW. However the News Desk is also the heart of CCTV-9. Why is this? Because, if CCTV-9 is to be a news channel, and not a broadcaster, priority in editorial and production must go to the news. If this is the direction the channel takes, the News Desk will have the authority, backed by the News Director, to make alterations to the broadcast schedule for worthy breaking and developing stories, live events, pressers, etc.

In addition to its responsibilities to news, the Assignment Desk also has a special responsibility to coordinate with Current Affairs programming (Dialogue, World Insight, China This Week, Up Close) to ensure both news and Current Affairs are on the same page, sharing resources and communicating with one another at all times.

#### **NEWS DESK RELATIONS WITH MANAGEMENT**

The News Desk heads ([xxx] – News, [xxx] – AD) report to [xxx], who reports to [Controller].

#### **THE LOCATION AND LAYOUT OF THE NEWS DESK**

##### **Location**

“Location, location, location. The News Desk should be in a central location in the newsroom, so everyone can hear and see what’s going on. KCRA in Sacramento recently removed a glass wall that separated the desk from producers.” (source: <http://www.newslab.org/resources/desktips.htm>)

This is exactly the challenge facing CCTV-9, to bring the News Desk together, and make it visible to the production staff.

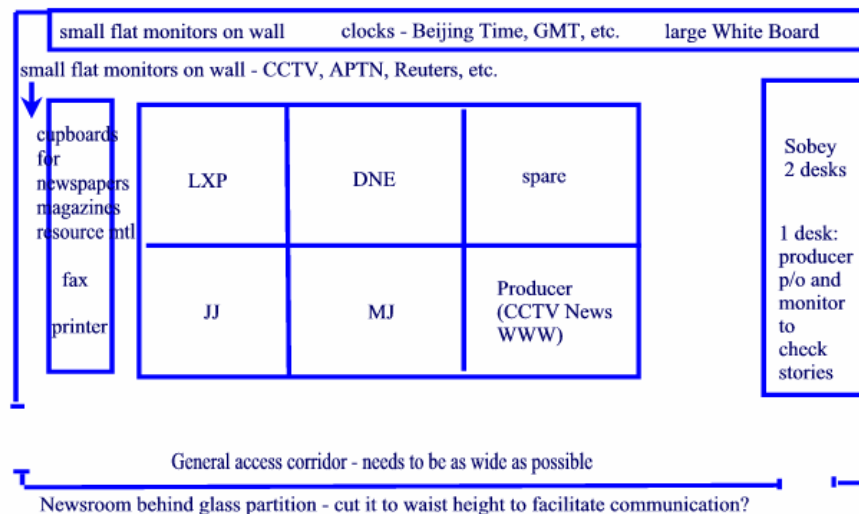
In order to be visible, the CCTV-9 News Desk should be in an open space. The best space available is the space currently occupied by the Producers’ (Chief Editors’) office and the Sobey technicians’ office. The walls between the corridor to these two offices and the wall dividing them should be removed (assuming they are not load

bearing walls) to make space to create the News Desk and make the News Desk visible to the Newsroom.

Whether CCTV-9 can create a successful News Desk depends largely on the location, and creating a cohesive and face-to-face news gathering, coordination and production space.

## Layout

The News Desk itself should be six large desks arranged back to back in the layout below:



Basic features:

1) Each of the six desks should have:

- a) an Internet access computer
- b) a Sobey editing computer

c) a phone (with International lines on all if possible)

d) the Sobey computer system will also support a channel wide intranet, which will be created as part of the creation of the News Desk. The CCTV-9 intranet will become the most important information sharing space in the channel

e) the monitors need to be flat screen and the boxes able to fit beneath the desks

f) choosing the right desks is very important.

2) The 'spare' desk could be a second DNE position (M-F daytime) for a news researcher/editor or it could give the Producers a desk to work at during their handover. If it really is 'spare,' it will provide a space for the Controller, News Director, directors, writers, reporters, etc. to visit and discuss News Desk issues with the desk. It will also provide an extra work station for big story days. And it will be a place for the Assignment Desk technical coordinator to sit when necessary.

3) The left wall has small flat monitors. Beneath the monitors are cupboards for newspaper, magazines, etc. On top of the cupboard are the fax and printer, dictionaries etc.

4) The back wall has small flat monitors – CCTV, APTN, Reuters, BBC, etc. and a large white board. Above the monitors and white board is a row of clocks – Beijing Time, GMT, Delhi, New York, London, Cairo, Santiago, etc.

5) The Sobey technicians will keep two desks backing onto the wall with the sound booth behind it. The current third desk on that wall, and right hand desk will become the monitoring station for the CCTV News and WWW Producer to check tapes, etc.

6) We should also consider whether to cut the glass wall between the newsroom and corridor to waist height to facilitate communication.

## NEWS DESK SCHEDULE

The News Desk schedule recognizes that:

- a) most news is planned
- b) the focus of CCTV news gathering should be China stories first.
- c) that most China stories happen during the working week
- d) that for planning purposes daytimes, weekdays are the busiest times for getting access to news makers in China.
- e) the evening and midnight DNEs will be responsible for liaising with European and American entities.

**Senior Producer: [xxx] (M-F daytime)**

**Head of the Assignment Desk: [xxx] (M-F daytime)**

**DNEs: 4 DNEs are needed to provide a 24 x 7 x 365 rotation (except for 0000 – 0800 Saturday, which is ‘dead time.’).**

### DNE Rotation

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
0800	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
1600	c	c	c	d	d	d	d
0000	b	b	b	b	b	Empty	c
0800	b	b	b	b	b	b	b
1600	d	d	d	a	a	a	a
0000	c	c	c	c	c	Empty	d
0800	c	c	c	c	c	c	c
1600	a	a	a	b	b	b	b
0000	d	d	d	d	d	Empty	a
0800	d	d	d	d	d	d	d
1600	b	b	b	c	c	c	c
0000	a	a	a	a	a	Empty	b

## **CCTV News, WWW Producers (TBA) (24 x 7 x 365 rotation)**

### **Ad hoc Producer: Jirik (M-F daytime)**

#### **WHAT THE NEWS DESK DOES NOT DO**

a) The CCTV News and WWW producer are part of the News Desk. Apart from these two shows, the News Desk does not do news planning and news editing for any news shows. It is up to the producers of CultX, Sports, BizChina to news edit and produce these shows. The News Desk can alert producers of other shows to stories, but is not responsible for missed stories.

b) The CCTV News and WWW Producer does not screen tapes for any show except CCTV News and WWW. All tape screening prior to airing for other shows is done by the producers of those shows.

c) The News Desk does not do the work of the producers of Current Affairs. The News Desk does coordinate with Current Affairs (Dialogue, World Insight, China This Week, Up Close) to provide some support as needed.

d) The News Desk does not micro-manage the work of the Reporting Group. The key to the success of the Reporting Group is the balance between autonomy to develop their own stories, and responsibility to the AD and Senior Producer (News) to do stories suggested by the latter with the agreement of the Senior Producer (Reporting Group)

#### **FINAL NOTES ON BUILDING A BETTER NEWS DESK**

(Adapted from ‘Six Tips for a Better Assignment Desk by Deborah Potter & <http://www.newslab.org/articles/deskbuild.htm>)

##### **1. Find the right people**

Desk people have to be experienced people, who are journalists first.

##### **2. Give the desk authority**



To meet the challenges of the desk, Desk Editors (the generic term for anybody who works on the News Desk) need both management support and the authority to act quickly. This suggests a newsroom structure in which the Head of the Assignment Desk ([name]) and Senior Producer (News) are equal second in the table of organization, right behind the News Director ([name]). This tells everyone in the newsroom that the desk is about making decisions, not just relaying them.

Once the hierarchy is established, the News Director needs to let the desk do its job. “The hardest thing for me to do as a news director when there’s breaking news going on is to step back and leave the desk alone,” says KHWB-TV, Houston, News Director Joe Nolan. To thrive on the desk, he says, you need a tough hide. You also need people skills. That means treating everyone with respect, and establishing a mutual sense of trust. Desk Editors without that kind of background can pick it up on the job, with management support.

### 3. Encourage communication

A News Desk that communicates early, often, and with everyone stands the best chance of success.

### 4. Make the News Desk accessible

The physical layout of the newsroom can help or hinder communication. Bill Carey, news director at WXYZ-TV in Detroit, likes having the News Desk in the center of the newsroom so everyone can see and hear what’s going on. “I like it when they stand up and shout,” he says.

### 5. Think ahead

A good News Desk is always ahead of the story, proactive and never simply reacting.

### 6. Don’t micro-manage.

The News Director does not do the job of the News Desk. And the News Desk does not do the work of the newsroom (directors, writers, copy editors, political editors), other news sections and Current Affairs.

## **Appendix 10: Examples of story types**

Example of copy story

Date aired: August 2, 2004

[slug] HK gov't clarifies political position

[lead in] (COPY) Welcome back. The Hong Kong S-A-R government says any debate about the region's political system, including the method of choosing the chief executive and the Legislative Council, should be confined to the framework of the Basic Law of Hong Kong. An S-A-R government spokesman said on Sunday, that under the Basic Law, the SAR has a high degree of autonomy and enjoys executive, legislative and independent judicial power. He said the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has the right to interpret the Basic Law. And added Hong Kong has no right to decide on any changes to its political system. The spokesman said the NPC makes decisions in line with Hong Kong's reality and for the benefit of the region's people.

Example of take story

Date aired: July 28, 2004

[slug] Chinese boat rescues Senegal sailors

[lead in] A Chinese fishing boat has rescued the crew of a Senegal cargo vessel that went down in the sea near Gambia on Monday, carrying 970 tons of cement. (TAKE MAP) All 13 sailors on board were rescued by a passing Chinese fishing boat, belonging to the Nantong distant water fishery company. The Senegal Marine Economy Ministry says it will inspect all commercial freighters in the next few days. (OUT)

Example of writer story

Date aired: February 1, 2004

[super] MIDEAST WALL

[slug] Palestinians urge UN court to rule on barrier

[lead in] The Palestinian Authority says it has submitted a formal affidavit to the International Court of Justice supporting its right to rule on the legality of a huge barrier Israel is building in the West Bank. This comes in the face of Israeli, US, and British opposition to such hearings at The Hague-based UN court. [Writer] has the details.

[voice over] After every Palestinian suicide bombing, the wall that Israel is building to seal itself off from the West Bank grows more popular with its leaders. But Palestinians say the barrier is an Apartheid Wall designed to seal a permanent hold on land Israel has occupied since the 1967 Middle East war.

[super] NABIL ABU RDAINAH Senior Advisor to Yasser Arafat

[Sound bite] [English] “According to the law and according to the laws, and the international law ,this is an illegal action and we urge the court and we urge all the countries to do all their best in order to protect the Palestinians’ rights and to protect Palestinians’ land.”

[voice over] The tribunal in The Hague will begin deliberations late this month in response to a UN General Assembly request to rule whether Israel is legally obliged to tear down the barrier. The court has authorized the Arab League to take part in the proceedings in support of the Palestinians. But America, Israel’s closest ally, filed its argument on Friday saying the World Court is not the proper forum to decide the legality of the barrier. London also has handed a statement protesting a hearing on the barrier held without Israel’s agreement. [Writer], CCTV.

## **Appendix 11: Copy editor productivity**

To develop the index of copy editor productivity, I used the shifts worked in August 2005 by all the copy editors who were on foreign expert contracts and attached to the newsroom. Using rundowns of all the bulletins handled by those foreign experts that month, including during shifts worked in other news sections such as Culture Express, Sports Scene and Biz China, I counted how many of each type of bulletin element each copy editor had handled during the month.

Because the different bulletin elements were of different lengths, each element was weighted according to a scale developed by calculating from the scripts used for the survey of content what each element was worth with a copy story arbitrarily weighted at one as a reference point, since a copy story was the shortest story form.

The relative weighting of different elements was derived by developing an average duration for the different elements used in the survey of content. However, I only had durations from the survey of content for the following general news elements: headlines, copy, take and (writer or reporter) stories. All other elements were given a weighting in terms of general news elements (for which I had accurate average durations) that were approximately of equal length. I estimated length by counting lines of script in most cases, and by timing stories in the case of World Insight and a series of 30 minute feature stories the foreign experts were copy editing at the time). Although using approximations introduced an element of arbitrariness into development of the index, the relatively small percentage of elements (9%) that I did not have accurate average durations for compared to those for which I did (91%) gave me confidence that any distortion was relatively minor.

The following table shows the index components and their relative weighting:

Section	Bulletin element	Average duration (mm:ss)	Relative weighting
General News	Breaking news		as for Story (3.65)
	Coming up next		as for Copy (1.00)
	Copy	00.30	1.00
	Headlines	00.29	0.95
	Studio interview questions		2.00 *
	Lead out		as for Copy (1.00)
	News bar		as for Story (3.65)
	News in brief		as for Story (3.65)
	Promo		as for Copy (1.00)
	Story (writer or reporter)	01.51	3.65
	Take	00.46	1.52
Biz China	BC Markets		as for Story (3.65)
	BC Story		as for story (3.65)
	BC Take		as for Take (1.52)
China This Week	CTW Headlines		as for Headlines (0.95)
	CTW Story		as for Story (3.65)
China Today	CT News in brief		as for Story (3.65)
	CT Story		as for Story (3.65)
	CT Take		as for Take (1.52)
Culture Express	CE Countdown		as for Story (3.65)
	CE Culture briefs		as for Story (3.65)
	CE Style Watch		as for Story (3.65)
	CE The List		as for Story (3.65)
	CE Spotlight		as for Story (3.65)
	CE 24/7		as for Story (3.65)
Dialogue	DL Story		as for Story (3.65)
Sports Scene	SS Sports briefs		as for Story (3.65)
World Insight	WI Headlines		as for headlines (0.95)
	WI Story	8.00 **	15.82
Special Feature	Story	24.00 ***	48.00

Table 14: Weighting of stories used for copy editor comparison

- \* Studio interviews usually had three questions. I estimated their relative weight to be somewhat more than a 'take' story and somewhat less than a story. However as interview questions comprised less than 1 percent of the total story elements, whatever miscalculation is factored into a relative weighting of 2.00 is unlikely to distort the overall picture to any great degree.
- \*\* I copy edited World Insight almost exclusively. Each 30 minute bulletin had three stories. Six minutes was reserved for filler, including the headlines.
- \*\*\* Each feature story was for a half hour bulletin. I calculated 24.00 minutes with six minutes of filler and rounded the relative weighting to 48.00 with reference to a World Insight story at one third the length. Again, like studio interview questions, the feature stories were an almost negligible proportion of the overall workload.

## Appendix 12: Illustration of the copy editing process

Stage 1: Writer starts with an APTN script and rewrites it.

1. Sep 5, 0300 # 2 (originally broadcast 2004-09-04 2100)

a) submitted by [REDACTED] (2004-09-04 1948)

### 【文稿标题】

Russia: siege wrap(2100/ap/[REDACTED])

### 【文稿内容】

【Super】SCHOOL TRAGEDY

【Super】Putin visits site of hostage tragedy

### 【Lead\_in】

~~In Russia,~~ according to the Xinhua news agency, at least 322 people have died in the three-day Russian hostage crisis. President Vladimir Putin has made a surprise visit to the southern town of Beslan, ~~hours after commandos stormed a school where militants were children hostage. The President tragedy has left at least 250 people dead. Putin has ordered North Ossetia's borders closed and the city of Beslan sealed off, as soldiers continue to hunt for militants.~~ [REDACTED] has more...

### 【Voice\_over】

Fear has given way to grief, anger and desperation for loved ones of hundreds of children and adults who were taken hostage at school No. 1 in Beslan. After the three days of hellish captivity, shadows didn't seem to clear away. On Saturday morning, the school's compound was eerily quiet. Troops continued to patrol the area.

Security forces have recovered 322 bodies so far, among them, there were 155 children. Police and medical authorities were still trying to identify the bodies.

President

Putin made a trip before dawn, ~~paid a three-hour pre-dawn visit to the town in North Ossetia,~~ as smoke still rose from the devastated buildings ~~school. Visiting a local hospital, he saw some of the victims and talked to hospital officials.~~ Putin ordered the region's borders closed while officials searched for terrorists who escaped the school. Officials said the terrorists are international.

### 【Super】

ASLAN ASLAKHANOV

Russian President's aide

### 【Sound\_bite】()

"Who exactly they are and which states they represent is unknown. But we have information that nine from among the murdered hostage takers are Arab nationals."

【Voice over】He also warned against letting the attack stir up tensions in the multi-ethnic North Caucasus region. He noted anyone who gives in to such a provocation will be viewed as abetting terrorism.



~~【Super】~~

~~VLADIMIR PUTIN~~

~~Russian President~~

~~【Sound\_bite】(Russian)~~

~~"It is not the first time that Northern Ossetia has been attacked hit by terrorists. This republic is Russia's outpost in the south. But this terrorist act is especially cruel and inhuman, because children were attacked this time."~~

~~【Voice\_over】~~

~~Emergency Situations Ministry officials said 704 people were hospitalized, but health officials said 531 people remained in hospitals, including 283 children — 92 of the children in "very grave" condition.~~

~~Russia's Federal Security Service said notorious Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev masterminded the hostage-taking, which was carried out by his field commander. Meanwhile, thr those who survived the incident, many are still in dangerous stages. Outside of the local hospital, bewildered relatives clustered at the entrance, waiting for news of the injured.~~

 CCTV

## Stage 2: Copy editor reworks writer's script.

b) copy edited by [REDACTED] (2004-09-04 1956)

### 【文稿标题】

Russia: siege wrap (2100/ap/[REDACTED])

### 【文稿内容】

【Super】{RUSSIAN SIEGE} SCHOOL TRAGEDY

【Super】Putin visits site of hostage tragedy

### 【Lead\_in】

~~According to the~~ Xinhua news agency (says), at least 322 people have died in the three-day Russian hostage crisis {in the southern town of Beslan. Earlier,} President Vladimir Putin {visited the site,} ~~has made a visit to the southern town of Beslan. The President has order(ing)ed~~ North Ossetia's borders closed and the city of Beslan sealed off, as soldiers continue to hunt for militants. [REDACTED] has more...

### 【Voice\_over】

Fear has given way to grief, anger and desperation for {the} loved ones of hundreds of children and adults who were taken hostage at school No.1 in Beslan. After the three days of hellish captivity, ~~shadows didn't seem to clear away. On Saturday morning,~~ the school's compound was eerily quiet {on Saturday morning}. Troops continued to patrol the area.

Security forces have recovered 322 bodies so far{. A}, ~~among them, there were~~ 155 children. Police and medical authorities were still trying to identify the bodies.

President Putin ~~made~~ {visited} ~~a trip~~ {the site} before dawn, as smoke still rose from the devastated building. Putin ordered the region's borders closed while officials searched for terrorists who escaped the school. Officials said {foreign nationals} ~~the terrorists were involved~~ ~~are international~~.

### 【Super】

ASLAN ASLAKHANOV

Russian President's aide

### 【Sound\_bite】(R)

"Who exactly they are and which states they represent is unknown. But we have information that nine from among the murdered hostage takers are Arab nationals. "

### 【Voice\_over】

Meanwhile, {many of} ~~for~~ those who {were injured in} ~~survived~~ the incident {are still in critical condition}, ~~many are still in dangerous stages~~. Outside ~~of~~ the local hospital, bewildered relatives clustered at the entrance, waiting for news of the injured.

[REDACTED] CCTV

### Stage 3: Political editor checks the script, making minor changes.

c) passed by [REDACTED] (2004-09-04 2007)

**【文稿标题】**

Russia: siege wrap (2100/ap/[REDACTED])

**【文稿内容】**

**【Super】** RUSSIAN SIEGE

**【Super】** Putin visits site of hostage tragedy

**【Lead\_in】**

{Russia' Deputy Prosecutor General Sergei Fridinsky} ~~Xinhua news agency~~ sa{id}ys at least 322 people have died in the three-day Russian hostage crisis in the southern town of Beslan. Earlier, President Vladimir Putin visited the site, ordering North Ossetia's borders closed and the city of Beslan sealed off, as soldiers continue to hunt for militants. [REDACTED] has more...

**【Voice\_over】**

Fear has given way to grief, anger and desperation for the loved ones of hundreds of children and adults who were taken hostage at school No.1 in Beslan. After the three days of hellish captivity, the school's compound was eerily quiet on Saturday morning. Troops continued to patrol the area.

Security forces have recovered 322 bodies so far. Among them were 155 children. Police and medical authorities were still trying to identify the bodies.

President Putin visited the site before dawn, as smoke still rose from the devastated building. Putin ordered the region's borders closed while officials searched for terrorists who escaped the school. Officials said foreign nationals were involved.

**【Super】**

ASLAN ASLAKHANOV

Russian President's aide

**【Sound\_bite】** (R)

"Who exactly they are and which states they represent is unknown. But we have information that nine from among the murdered hostage takers are Arab nationals."

**【Voice\_over】**

Meanwhile, many of those who were injured in the incident are still in critical condition. Outside the local hospital, bewildered relatives clustered at the entrance, waiting for news of the injured.

[REDACTED]-CCTV [.]

### **Appendix 13: Tsunami emails**

Email 1: From John Jirik to CCTV-9 Senior Management

Sent: December 31, 2004, 23:04

To: [Senior Producer, News], [Deputy Controller, Head of News]

Subject: News Bar, sensitivity of stories

Cc: [Senior management][Outside consultant]

Pro: [X], [Y]

Cc: [Senior management][Outside consultant]

Ex: Jirik

Three things:

a) I suggest you consider reviving the news bar on all newscasts while the special focus on the tsunami continues. This will allow you to report headlines on the stories, we will be otherwise missing. As one TV critic in the US pointed out on the weekend (he was talking about blanket US coverage of the tsunami), over 100,000 civilians died in Iraq in 2004, but not much of their story got into the news with the focus on US military operations and insurgent attacks. So, even with a focus on the tsunami, using the news bar to cover other stories might help to provide balanced coverage.

b) [Head of the Foreign Experts] sent the following to the foreign experts on Saturday, as part of a note that [Senior Producer, News] asked him to send following the producers' meeting on Saturday:

“Since the crisis is so close to China and involves countries that are so geographically and politically interrelated to China in Asia, the Zhubians have also been asked to take extra special care regarding the Tsunami-related stories, staying vigilant and sensitive (including politically) to the crisis situation.”

I honestly think we would serve the Chinese government, people, and our viewers best if we do not politicize this story. For example, on Saturday evening, Japan announced it would provide 500 million USD in aid, the single biggest donation by any country by far (the US is second with 350 million), raising the total of donations by over 25% from 1.36 to 1.86 billion dollars. However, when I suggested this was a significant new element to the aid story, I was asked whether it was on Xinhua. We did not report it on 2300, or Sunday 0000. Did Xinhua ever report it? And why do we have to wait? If Xinhua did not report it, then shame on Xinhua too.

Finding the right balance between reporting the facts, and focusing on the Chinese angle -- what China is doing for victims -- is important to doing this story right. The fact is that China will do a lot, but it will not be able to do as much as some other countries, regions, etc. That does not diminish China's contribution in any way. BUT, if we are to report the Tsunami story accurately, we should be accurate about who is doing what, and what is happening where.

c) Even a week after the disaster, we are still competing inside the channel, and little sense of coordinated coverage is emerging. For example, last week, when I alerted World Wide Watch that Asia Today had a phoner, and that they should talk to Asia Today about doing it for WWW and repeating it on Asia Today, I was later told Asia Today was unhappy that they did not have the phoner exclusive.

On Saturday, I recommended to [senior management] that whenever you have a good phoner, whether from your own correspondent, a stringer, official, Reuters, etc. try to use it at least twice. And if it is for WWW, then it should be repeated on Asia Today and 2100. This is normal practise for BBC, CNN. And, it does not diminish the impact of the phoner to repeat it.

In addition, I spoke with [senior management] on Saturday about the phoners, and we agreed they should not be repeated 'as live.' I.e. They should be repeated with a lead-in that makes clear it is recorded. We did this with [A]'s Reuters phoner that he gave [anchor] Saturday on WWW and repeated it on 2100, using [anchor]'s voice as is. It made it easier to edit, and worked very well. [zhubian] or [director] can show you the video and how it worked. Please see the story for a model lead in and lead out (for some reason the lead out was not read out on air).

On the issue of CCTV-9 programs competing with one another. I suggest you seriously think about how to limit this to how and where it is appropriate. It is great that producers are wanting to do their best for their show, but it must not be at the expense of the channel as a whole. The channel will be stronger for developing synergies, and cooperating internally, sharing resources and shows helping one another out. Competition is healthy, to a degree, but when it is dysfunctional to the overall development of the channel, then it is unhealthy.

Best Rgds.

John.

Email 2: From CCTV-9 Senior Management in response to my email. I have only included here the first few lines of the reply, which included the original email (above) verbatim in its entirety and was sent to the news management team and head of features.

From: [Senior management]

Date: Jan 01, 2005, 07:06:17 PM

To: John Jirik; [Deputy Controller, Head of News]; [zhubian], [zhubian], [Deputy Controller, Head of Features], [Chief Chinese anchors], [zhubian], [zhubian]

Subject: Re: News Bar, sensitivity of stories

Hi John,

I fully agree with you. I've forwarded your email to all the producers. We can re-impose the News Bar today.

[Senior management]

--- John Jirik <john@jirik.com> wrote:

> Pro: [X], [Y]

> Cc: [Senior management][Outside consultant]

> Ex: Jirik

>

> Three things...

Email 3: my response after watching two more bulletins.

Sent: January 1, 2005, 21:51

To: [Senior management], [Head of the Assignment Desk], [Senior Producer, News], [Deputy Controller, Head of News]

Subject: CCTV News Mon 0000

Cc: [Outside consultant]

Bcc: [Head of the Foreign Experts]

As a 'loyal' viewer of CCTV-9, at this point I am kind of confused.

I've just watched two more news bulletins, and the news is coming across to me not as news, but as a kind of 'China promotion.'

I said WWW Dec 2 was a credit to all, but CCTV News is falling far short of what viewers should be able to expect.

The tsunami story is about the countries, and peoples affected. One element of this story is China's contribution to the aid effort: the facts - 60 million USD + several

emergency teams. 60 mln USD is 3% of the total. As a foreigner -- the target audience for this channel -- I would like to know where the other 97% is coming from, what other countries are doing, etc. The bulk of the emergency work is being handled by local agencies, international agencies like the UN and Red Cross. The United States is supplying aircraft, other countries are supplying all kinds of aid, material and personnel. I would like to know about all this, so that I can put in context China's valuable contribution.

AVN, and the video agencies APTN and Reuters are pouring out material. Where is this material? Where is the story -- the incredible international relief effort, and the real situation on the ground?

CCTV-9 is not doing anybody a service by putting out a kind of news that distorts the picture -- by including some facts but ignoring many others -- in the interests of promoting China. Any person in a tsunami-affected area, who sees our news would probably be saddened at the self promotion China is doing, via CCTV-9, and probably angry that China is using this tragedy to promote itself. To my mind, we will lose viewers and friends in the Asian region, not gain them, with this kind of coverage. Outside the affected area, I think viewers are probably just watching and scratching their heads in a kind of sad bemusement.

I said in my email to [senior management] yesterday, I honestly think we would best serve the Chinese government, people, and our viewers if we do not politicize this story. Most of what I saw on CCTV News on Dec. 2 at 2100 and Dec. 3 at 0000 was nothing but the politicization of this story. IF you want people to respect China, the Chinese government, the Chinese people, and CCTV News on CCTV-9, then please, just do the news, the whole news, and nothing but the news.

Best Rgds.



John.

## Appendix 14: World Insight team & 2005 award



Illustration 18: World Insight on the web, showing the anchor and the production team.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>182</sup> Source: <http://english.cctv.com/program/WorldInsightold/01/index.shtml>. Accessed February 28, 2006.

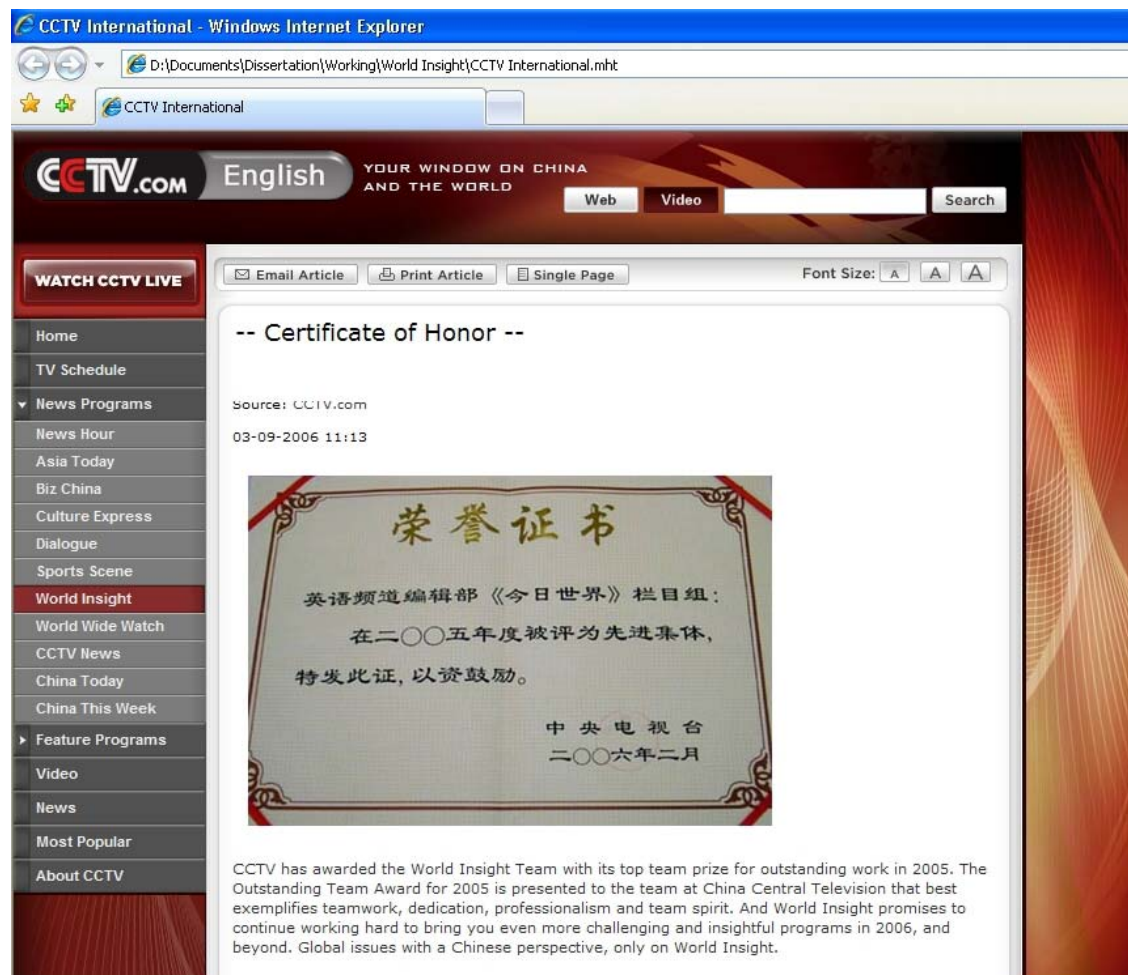


Illustration 19: 2005 CCTV Outstanding Team Award for World Insight<sup>183</sup>

<sup>183</sup> Source: <http://english.cctv.com/program/worldinsight/20060309/100690.shtml>. Accessed February 28, 2006.

## **Appendix 15: AIDS Report**

Script #1: Submitted by the reporter for copy editing (reproduced here as submitted)

Super: Changes of Wenlou--- two sides of one coin

Lead-in: In recent years, Wenlou village, of Shangcai county in central China's Henan Province has hit headlines of worldwide media. The village has AIDS patients in nearly every household. Since early this year, changes are taking place in the village as the government is sending work team there to help the fight against the disease. In our first story of AIDS REPORT, our reporter [name] brings you the latest changes in the village, and finds out that villagers are hoping the government dose more to help them.

Voice-over:

This is Wenlou in the past,  
and this is Wenlou today.

At the entrance of the village, HIV/AIDS patients are organized to practice dancing. Officials say this activity can help them rebuild confidence of life. The Chinese government set the goal to build Five basic infrastructure project to every AIDS affected village in Henan. They include: one paved road, a well, a school, a clinic and an orphanage. Wenlou village also build one cultural entertainment house and headquarters for the village committee. One village head released that these infrastructure costs some ten million yuan.

SUPER: WU XIULI

Villager, Wenlou

SOUNDBITES(c): "I like these changes, and happy to see the new roads and clinics in the village." (01-16-58-4)

SUPER: Villager, Wenlou

Soundbites: (C): “It’s good to let officials live with us, otherwise who will build these new buildings for us ?” (01:00:36-3)

Voice-over:

One key person to help all these changes is Chen ‘Ruijin, a 55 year old official from the provincial health bureau. Chen Ruijin has been staying in the village and be neighbors of HIV/AIDS sufferers for the past three months. Most of his time was spent in strengthening infrastructure to fight the disease. He is among one of the 76 government officials from central Henan Province to have been dispatched to work in the most seriously affected villages three months ago.

Chen’s top pride was the enlargement of village clinic. He says that his function was to make it a reality and supervise free medical treatment to AIDS carriers in Wenlou.

SUPER: CHEN RUIJIN

Former Provincial Health Official

Soundbites(C): “ These infrastructure has played key role to increase villagers’ desire for a better life. “ (00:56:37-3)

Voice-over:

Chen said he knows AIDS sufferers pains better now, their problems had long been ignored. So he is trying to help them.

But not all of the villagers are satisfied with the changes. Some are asking for more.

(Picture: One villager came up to quarrel with Chen Ruijin....)

This lady may be an extreme case, but she is not alone in her desperation.

Behind the beautiful picture of the village are the unpleasant images. Most villagers are still living in dilapidated houses, their pocket is as empty as before.

Cheng Yansheng and her wife Wei Pan are both HIV patients. Five years ago, Cheng began to show symptom of the disease. Today, their income solely depends on farming. But with poor health, life is difficult for them.

SUPER: CHENG YANGSHENG

Villager, Wenlou

Soundbite: “If they give money to us, we will spend it quickly. They should help us in farming. “

(01:30:07-3)

VOICE-OVER:

This old lady said she lost all of her four sons in three years. All of them died of AIDS because of blood contraindication.

SUPER: Villager

SOUNDBITE: “ There are too many poor villagers here, I’m being neglected.”(01:36:51-3)

VOICE-OVER:

Villagers say county officials once told them in April that those with full-blown AIDS would get 300 yuan a month to buy medicine, and the less seriously ill would get 100 yuan. But none of the villagers we interviewed have received any money. What they’ve got was only 50 yuan funding from the government last year, and a bunch of flour.

The provincial government said that it has earmarked over 30(80?) million yuan, or some 3.6(9.6) million US dollars, to finance building of the facilities. Villagers say building roads and expanding clinics are good, but what they need most is to improve their lives.

36- year old Meng Jieshi says the clinics in the village is vital, but it's waste of money to build such a nice headquarters for the village committee. What they need most is the direct financial assistance to their lives.

SUPER : MENG JIESHI

Villager

SOUNDBITE: "Nothing changes here. There are so many AIDS patients, so we have to rely on ourselves. Only the government can not help, and we don't have guarantee for our livelihood.

(01:37:45)

Voice-over:

He hopes the officials can help to establish a business in the village that can accommodate all patients, and let them work and make a living by their own hands. Only giving money can not solve their problem.

In Central China, there are many other villages, that their AIDS situation is as serious as Wenlou, but they have not received as much funding as Wenlou dose.

Stand-up: " To she its reputation as a notorious AIDS village, officials in Wenlou are trying to recreate it as a pioneer in the fight against AIDS. But villagers here continue to die, and they are demanding the government dose more to help them. [name], CCTV, Henan Province."

=====

Script #2 Copy edited version of Script #1

	CHANGES OF WENLOU
	LEADIN:
WENLOU CHANGE OF FOCUS SHOT	This is Wenlou, a village in Henan Province that has come to symbolize China's struggle with AIDS.
GVs VILLAGE SHOTS	One way or another, the disease has affected every family here.
MEDIUM VARIOUS OF VILLAGERS	Many people are HIV positive. Some have lost family members. All of them have lost friends.
WIDESHOT OF CHEN, OR SHOTS FROM WCH'S TAPE	Recognizing the extent of the tragedy, in 2003 the provincial government sent 76 officials to the worst affected areas.
MEDIUM OR CLOSEUP OF CHEN	Chen Ruijin was one of them. He is now responsible for overseeing AIDS related projects in the village.
CLINIC, HOPEFULLY WITH CHEN	Under Chen's direction, a new clinic has been built.
SUPER (CHEN RUIJIN)	SUPER: CHEN RUIJIN Former Provincial Health Official
BITE (CHEN) (00:56:37-3)	"Infrastructure projects like this are playing a key role in increasing the desire of the villagers for a better life."
CLINIC SHOTS //	The provincial government set itself the goal of providing each AIDS affected village in Henan with five basic needs: a paved road, a well, a school, an orphanage and a clinic.
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION	Construction of the school is well underway. Local officials say the government could spend as much as a million dollars renovating the village.
DANCING ON STREET	This brand new road used to be a dirt track. On the day we visited, the villagers were celebrating the opening of the new clinic.
DANCING	Most of these young women are HIV positive. But now many feel they have been given a new lease on life.
SUPER (WU XIULI) (01-16-58-4)	SUPER: WU XIULI "I like these changes, and happy to see the new roads and clinics in the village."
SUPER (VILLAGER) (01:00:36-3)	SUPER: VILLAGER "It's good to have the officials here. Otherwise, who will build these new buildings for us?"



WIDESHOT CHEN ARGUING WITH VILLAGER	But not everyone is happy.
NATSOT ARGUMENT	NATSOT
ARGUMENT SHOTS	This woman argues with Chen, telling him as an official you have to take better care of them. They are arguing over the new houses and who should get them first.
	It's not an easy choice. The village is extremely poor, and much work still needs to be done.
	Cheng Yansheng and his wife Wei Pan are both HIV positive. They caught the disease selling blood in the 1990s.
	Now they are growing weaker. But they have no-one to help them on the land.
	It's a common story here. This old woman lost all four sons to AIDS, all from blood farming.
	Villagers agree that the new clinic and other projects are necessary. But they feel more could be done.
SUPER: MENG JIESHI	SUPER: MENG JIESHI
(01:37:45)	"There are so many AIDS patients, that we have only ourselves to rely on."
	Meng Jieshi believes the next step for Wenlou should be a business, something the villagers feel is their own, a way forward that will help them better help themselves.
	The government has allocated 10 million dollars to fight AIDS in Henan. But the changes in Wenlou can only be the beginning.
SUPER: [name]	SUPER: [name of reporter]
STANDUP	"To shed its reputation as a notorious AIDS village, officials in Wenlou are trying to recreate it as a pioneer in the fight against AIDS. But villagers here continue to die, and they are demanding the government does more to help them. Han Bin, CCTV, Henan Province."

=====

Script #3 (over page)

【标题】Changes of Wenlou - [REDACTED] 1200-- LEADOUT

【编辑人】[REDACTED] 【记者】[REDACTED]

---

【Super】AIDS in Henan Province

【Lead\_in】

AIDS is now an accepted part of the medical landscape in China with certain parts of the country devastated by the disease. Henan province is particularly hard-hit where illegal blood farming in the early 1990s infected thousands of people. Reporter [REDACTED] went to Wenlou village in Henan to investigate past problems and future challenges.

【Lead\_out】In our next story in this series on the struggle against HIV and AIDS in China, tomorrow reporter [REDACTED] visits an orphanage that has become a new home for children who have lost their parents to AIDS. (OUT)

【Voice\_over】(story has been censored and passed already!) This is Wenlou, a village in Henan Province that has come to symbolize China's struggle with AIDS.

One way or another, the disease has affected every family here. Many people are HIV positive. Some have lost family members. All of them have lost friends.

Recognizing the extent of the tragedy, in 2003, the provincial government sent 76 officials to the worst affected areas.

Chen Ruijin was one of them. He is now responsible for overseeing AIDS related projects in the village. Under Chen's direction, a new clinic has been built.

【Super】

【标 题】Changes of Wenlou - [REDACTED] 1200-- LEADOUT

【编 稿 人】[REDACTED] 【记 者】[REDACTED]

---

CHEN RUIJIN

Wenlou Provincial Health Official

【Sound\_bite】(Chinese)

"Infrastructure projects like this are playing a key role in increasing the desire of the villagers for a better life."

【Voice\_over】

The provincial government set itself the goal of providing each AIDS affected village in Henan with five basic needs: a paved road, a well, a school, an orphanage and a clinic. Local officials say the government could spend as much as a million dollars renovating the village.

This brand new road used to be a dirt track. On the day we visited, the villagers were celebrating the opening of the new clinic.

Most of these young women are HIV positive.

【Super】

WU XIULI

Villager, Wenlou

【Sound\_bite】(Chinese)

"I like these changes, and happy to see the new roads and clinics in the village."

【Super】

Villager, Wenlou

【Sound\_bite】(Chinese)

"It's good to have the officials here. Otherwise, who will build these new buildings for us?"

【标 题】Changes of Wenlou - [REDACTED] 1200-- LEADOUT

【编 稿 人】[REDACTED] 【记 者】[REDACTED]

---

【Voice\_over】

But not everyone is happy.

This woman argues with Chen, telling him as an official you have to take better care of the poorer residents. They are arguing over the new houses, and who should get them first.

It's not an easy choice. The village is extremely poor, and much work still needs to be done. Cheng Yanshang and his wife Wei Pan are both HIV positive. They caught the disease selling blood in the 1990s. Now they are growing weaker. But they have no-one to help them on the land.

Villagers agree that the new clinic and other projects are necessary. But they feel more could be done.

【Super】

MENG JIESHI

Villager, Wenlou

【Sound\_bite】(Chinese)

"There are so many AIDS patients, that we have only ourselves to rely on."

【Voice\_over】

Meng Jieshi believes the next step for Wenlou should be a business, something the villagers feel is their own, a way forward that will help them better themselves. The government has allocated ten million dollars to fight AIDS in Henan. But the changes in Wenlou should only be the beginning.

【Super】

CCTV-9 新闻文稿单

【标 题】Changes of Wenlou -- [REDACTED] 1200-- LEADOUT

【编 稿 人】[REDACTED] 【记 者】[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]  
Wenlou Village, Henan Province

【Stand\_up】

"To shed its reputation as a notorious AIDS village, officials in Wenlou are trying to recreate it as a pioneer in the fight against AIDS. But villagers here continue to die, and they are demanding the government do more to help them.

[REDACTED] CCTV, Henan Province."

## Appendix 16: Countries in the news

The following table shows the countries in the 1200 News pre- and post-relaunch. A country was counted as in the news if the country itself was mentioned or a province (state) or city within the country. The column ‘Explanation’ is used only to clarify ambiguity in the rationale for the allocation of a particular country to a particular region, or in the case of Taiwan, its inclusion as a country. The CIA World Factbook<sup>184</sup> was used as a starting point for the definition of regions.

	Pre-relaunch	Post-relaunch
Africa	Algeria	Chad
	Angola	Congo
	Gabon	Cote d’Ivoire
	Kenya	Gambia
	Liberia	Ghana
	Libya	Kenya
	Nigeria	Libya
	South Africa	Morocco
	Tunisia	Rwanda
		Senegal
		Somalia
		South Africa
		Sudan
		Tanzania
		Togo
Central America		Tunisia
	Haiti	Costa Rica
	Jamaica	Cuba
	Mexico	Dominican Republic
		El Salvador
Central Asia		Mexico
		Kyrgyzstan
		Kazakhstan
		Tajikistan

<sup>184</sup> Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>.

		Turkmenistan
		Uzbekistan
China	PRC	PRC
	Taiwan	Taiwan
Europe	Belgium	Andorra
	Denmark	Belgium
	France	Bulgaria
	Georgia	European Union
	Germany	France
	Great Britain	Georgia
	Ireland	Germany
	Italy	Great Britain
	Netherlands	Hungary
	Poland	Iceland
	Portugal	Italy
	Spain	Latvia
	Switzerland	Luxembourg
	Yugoslavia	Norway
		Poland
		Romania
		Spain
		Switzerland
		Vatican
Latin America	Argentina	Argentina
	Peru	Bolivia
	Uruguay	Brazil
	Venezuela	Chile
		Colombia
		Ecuador
		Paraguay
		Peru
		Uruguay
Middle East	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
	Bahrain	Egypt
	Egypt	Gaza
	Gaza	Iran
	Iran	Iraq
	Iraq	Israel
	Israel	Jordan
	Jordan	Kuwait
	Kuwait	Lebanon

	Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabia
	Syria	Syria
	Turkey	Turkey
	Yemen	
North America	Canada	Canada
	United States	United States
North East Asia	DPRK	DPRK
	Japan	Japan
	ROK	ROK
Oceania	Australia	Australia
	New Zealand	New Zealand
Russia	Russia	Russia
South East Asia	Indonesia	Indonesia
	Kampuchea	Myanmar
	Malaysia	Philippines
	Myanmar	Thailand
	Singapore	Vietnam
	Thailand	
	Vietnam	
Indian Subcontinent	Bangladesh	India
	India	Pakistan
	Pakistan	
	Sri Lanka	



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## **Vita**

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